STRIKE FORCE JOVE

COMPLETE SF COMBAT GAME
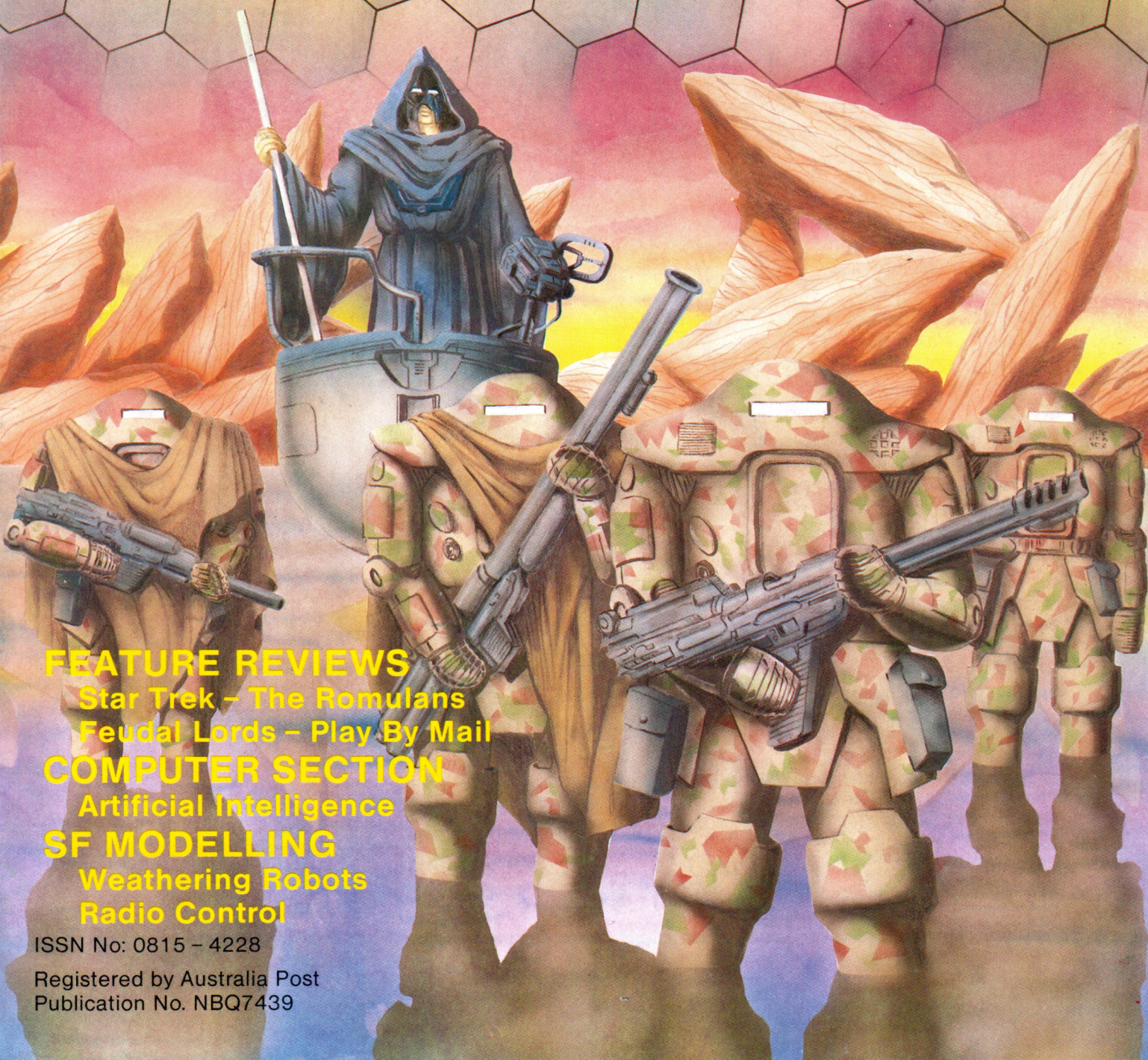
FEATURE REVIEWS
Star Trek – The Romulans
Feudal Lords – Play By Mail

COMPUTER SECTION
Artificial Intelligence

SF MODELLING
Weathering Robots
Radio Control

S.F.3.D. ORIGINAL

HOT CULT

PANDORA

MAGAZINE

Issue 2
Vol 1 No. 2
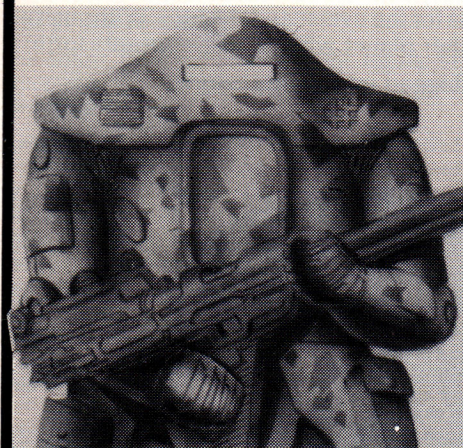
COVER

Another "Great!" Illustration by Ian Richards, that captures the very essence of fantasy gaming.

EDITORIAL
MERVYN BEAMISH

Mervyn Beamish

AUSSIECON TWO

From the 22nd to 26th August Science Fiction fans, writers, gamesters and hangers-on will converge on Melbourne by their hundereds for the 43rd World Science Fiction Convention – AUSSIECON TWO. Approximately two thousand delegates from all over the globe will attend.

The convention is being organised under the auspices of the Australian Science Fiction Foundation and is recognised as an official event as part of the State of Victoria's 150th Anniversary Celebrations.

But what is a SF convention? I really have to admit that I don't know. This will be the first that I have attended (that word *trepidation* will creep into the editorial again if I don't watch out!)

"In line with standard practice at recent Worldcons, the carrying of weapons will not be permitted......."

"....if you have special requirements for lighting or sound for your Masquerade presentation...."

"The local Society for Creative Anachronism is planning...."

The Southern Cross Hotel will be the main venue. The list of official and unofficial activities seem vast, not finalised, diverse and generally confusing. Artshow, models, banquet, fan groups, films, workshops, masquerades, hucksters stands, debates, lectures, riots and other nocturnal activities.

The guests of honour are:

Gene Wolfe – perhaps the best known of his works are the three-part novel *The Fifth Head of Cerberus*, the story "The Island of Doctor Death and Other Stories", and more recently, the tetralogy *The Book of the New Sun*, beginning with *The Shadow of the Torturer*. He has also written a highly regarded mainstream novel, *Peace*.

Ted White – long prominent in the science fiction community as fan, writer and editor. He has worked as an editor on such professional magazines as *Fantasy and Science Fiction, Amazing Stories* and *Fantastic*. His own fanzines have included *Stellar, Void, Minac,* and more recently, *Pong*.

Published in AUSSIECON's well put together (and regular) Progress Reports was and idiosyncratic guide to Australia for the overseas delegates. Without it a visitor might well think he is on another planet when a voice sprouts forth:

"Hey ya little pommy bastard! Ya flogged me bloody biro!"

Editor
Mervyn Beamish

SCIENCE FICTION

A REVIEW OF SPECULATIVE LITERATURE

ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO PAY FOR SCIENCE
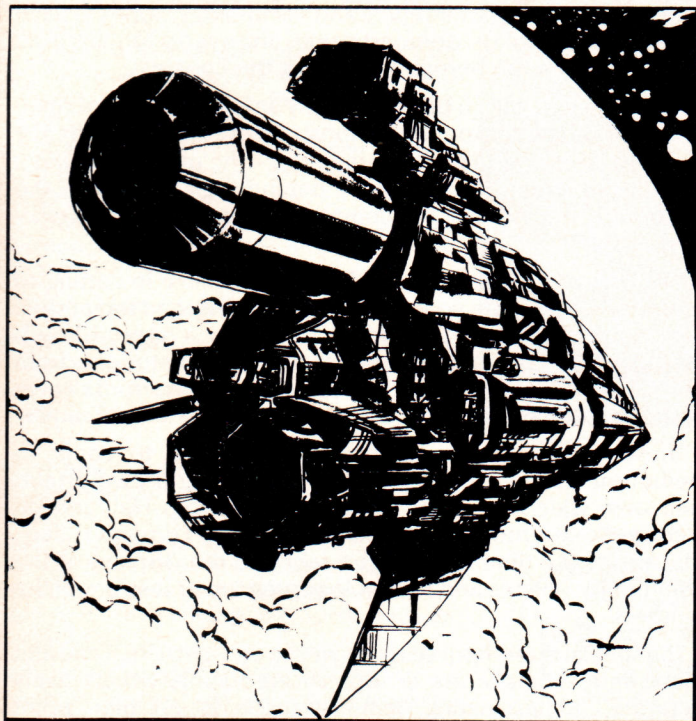
ANZAAS FESTIVAL OF SCIENCE
26-30 August 1985

When the organisers of a scientific gathering that has been gradually losing money and audiences for the last decade say they expect thousands of ordinary non-scientific citizens to pay $8 for the privilege of travelling to Clayton and attending a half-day session at this year's effort, sceptical laughter is perhaps excusable.

But that is just what Monash University's inheritors of the legacy of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science (ANZAAS) Congress are saying. In order to revitalise the ANZAAS tradition they are organizing a Festival of Science aimed squarely at interesting and involving the general public and students as well as scientists and social scientists.

What is more, under the chairmanship of the former Dean of Science at Monash, Professor John Swan, and the presidency of New Zealand ambassador and mountain climber, Sir Edmund Hillary, they have every confidence they will be successful.

"There's a whole range of indicators that people's interest in science is growing. Look at the number of popular science journals that have popped up in the last year or at the success of the television programme, "Towards 2000" or at the interest in computing in the schools," Swan said.

Even so, to translate that interest into bums-on-seats in Clayton is going to take some doing. But John Swan thinks it can be achieved with the help of deer farming and allergies, bushfires and the paranormal, AUSSAT and the preservation of music. He believes that the tag science covers many of the most interesting things in our lives, things many of us would pay $8 to find out about.

The organisers have asked Australian and New Zealand scientists and social scientists to submit ideas for sessions on any topic which seems particularly important to them, and on which they are prepared to run a half-day session which will attract a paying public. Debate between scientists of different disciplines also is encouraged.

Swan said: "The ideas for sessions are judged on four criteria. The people involved must be the best in their field. They must be communicators who are effective enough to cross disciplines and get through to the general public. How the session is presented is important; it must not be hamstrung by a talking heads format. And there has to be a market for it."

Take the session on deer farming, for instance. The convenor, Professor Roger Short of the Monash Department of Physiology, reckons he can interest 250 scientists, farmers, businessmen and enviromentalists in attending. But just to make sure, the $8 also will entitle the participants to a demonstration of darting and rocket-netting deer by helicopter, access to a local deer farm, and a venison barbeque. How's that for value!

Dr Tony Burgess, the director of the Ludwig Institute of Cancer Research, is willing to organise a session on the latest in his field that will not only cater for the educated layperson, but also will be appropriate to doctors for professional development. He is confident there is enough interest both in the general and medical communities to ensure a large audience.

But that is just the start of what is going to be happening at ANZAAS. Because this year it is not just a congress but a whole Festival of Science – a la arts festival.

For starters, there will be a Community Science and Technology program designed to show people what is happening in research laboratories and industry as well as demonstrate how technology affects their daily lives. Organiser Mr Bill Charles, who is employed on a grant from the Victorian Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Technology, hopes to have 150 scientific displays, demonstrations and events running in all parts of Melbourne before and during the congress.

"The program will go beyond simply an arrangement of open houses. It will endeavour to demonstrate the interdependence between science and its consequences – the physics behind a tram in the street, the chemistry behind a glass of beer, the electronics behind our telecommunications and emergency services."

The Festival of Science organisers also believe in getting to people while they are young. So they have engaged top people from universities and the media to design a special Youth ANZAAS, to be attended by at least two year 11 students from every secondary school in Victoria, as well as others from all over Australia and New Zealand and possibly Papua New Guinea.

These younger participants will be assisted to come to Melbourne by service clubs. On four mornings, they will attend their own special sessions in the Dallas Brooks Hall and on Wednesday afternoon will be addressed by Sir Edmund Hillary. The rest of the time they will be taken to the displays of the Community Science and Technology program or sessions of the congress.

The special three-hour sessions will be on Light, Life, Time and Space and will make use of sophisticated audio-visuals, lively lecturers and fascinating demonstrations to get their point across. They will be professionally presented stage presentations which will be filmed for television.

Perhaps the jewel in the crown of the festival will be the ASEAN Interaction – a one-day workshop/conference to be held at the Victorian Arts Centre to which it is hoped at least six scientists from each ASEAN nation will be invited.

ANZAAS is nearly 100 years old. But of late it has had declining support even within the scientific community. The reason is, John Swan says, that as more and more specialist organisations for specific disciplines appeared, they usurped the relevance of ANZAAS to many scientists.

But the paradox is, he says, that as science becomes more and more fragmented and complex, ANZAAS remains the only forum capable of getting scientists from different disciplines together – something which is becoming more and more critical. It also remains one of the few vehicles for involving the general public.

For full details of the Festival of Science program, write to ANZAAS Festival of Science Office, Monash University, Wellington Road, Clayton 3168, Victoria or telephone (03) 541 4011.

TODAY'S ANZAAS SESSION ON ALCOHOLISM AND SOCIETY!

THE WOODPECKER

It has no feathers, although it 'flies'. It has no beak, although it 'taps'. What is it? IT is Over-The-Horizon Radar (OTHR), and Australia is in the vanguard of its development.

OTHR is a very powerful, high frequency transmission which bounces off the ionosphere, 'hits' a target area, and a minuscule amount of that energy is reflected from the target area back along the same path to the transmitter site. Compare the time the signal is sent out, with the time it comes back, and theoretically moving objects can be detected.

The high frequency range of the energy spectrum is used because it bounces off the ionosphere, whereas shorter wave length frequencies such as infra-red and microwave pass through the ionosphere.

This operation is similar to short wave broadcasting and one of the important problems is that OTHR signals do not stop at the target area, but take subsequent hops, and so 'splatters' over the world's short wave broadcasting bands. The OTHR signals make a 'pecking' sound similar to a woodpecker's sound, and that is where the term originated.

While the signal is on its way up to the ionosphere, the radar is unable to detect a target. That means it is 'blind' out to about 1200KM from the transmitter site.

The Australian Jindalee OTHR system is expected to be upgraded from an experimental to an operational system this year.

The Association of North American Radio Clubs has established a non-profit, non-governmental committee to monitor events in this field.

Committee Chairman, Robert Horavitz, says, "We are just at the beginning of what looks like it is going to be fairly dramatic increase in the number of radars operating in the short wave band.

"The U-S Air Force is planning to build twelve OTHR sectors including two in Alaska that would be able to look into Siberia and cover the North Pacific. Each sector has 1.2 megawatts transmitter power.

"Most recently Japan has expressed an interest in acquiring a system from the U-S. There have been several reports that OTHR maybe based in England to cover the Baltic and the North Atlantic.

"So we are just starting to see now a very rapid proliferation of air defense OTHR and at the same time we are seeing an expansion of high fequency radars for ionospheric research," Horavitz said.

Part of the information gather to be done by the committee is to establish a world-wide team effort to track the woodpecker over five 24-hour periods in October. This will provide a clearer understanding of the woodpecker's band use.

SPACE SHUTTLE BACK

NASA's space shuttle begins its return from space high over the Indian Ocean just off the east coast of Africa when the shuttle's commander and the pilot fire the twin Orbital Manuovering Systems (OMS) rockets.

These rockets have a combined thrust of 53 kilonewtons (12,000 lbs) of thrust which is enough to slow the shuttle down from its seven kilometre per second orbital speed.

The shuttle roars back into the atmosphere, blazing a firery trail across the south pacific and passing east of New Zealand, then of French Polynesia. The glowing red hot shuttle makes the North American coast over Mexico, then swings north and passes over Los Angeles.

Here twin sonic booms reverberate down on the city as the shuttle streaks by at nearly 32,000 metres altitude at Mach 4, four times the speed of sound.

Just seven minutes later, the shuttle lands at Edwards Air Force Base in California's Mojave Desert.

When the shuttle rolls to a stop, a unique convoy of vehicles meets it. Convoy Commander, Bill Williams, says, "The convoy of specialised vehicles has the main task of providing ground services to the orbiter. This includes doing the safety assessment of the shuttle to ensure there is no toxic or flammable atmosphere.

"Another major responsibility is to assist the flight crew in departing the orbiter. We also have in the convoy special vehicles in case of an emergency."

There are at least twenty vehicles in the convoy, but maybe more depending upon the mission. For example, when the Space Lab is onboard, there are four extra vehicles assigned specifically to the Lab. Over 100 people crew the convoy vehicles.

The shuttle also lands at the Kennedy Space Centre at Cape Canaveral, Florida on America's east coast.

Williams says, "The difference between Edwards and the Cape is that at the Cape, the shuttle must land on a concrete runway three miles long. Whereas at Edwards, the preferred landing is on the dry lake bed, which is five miles long. Of course if the shuttle misses the runway right or left by a mile it probably wouldn't hurt because it would still be on the dry lake bed. But at the Cape any right or left miscalculation puts the shuttle in the swamp.

"The other advantage of the dry lake bed is that it is less punishing on the tyres than landing on concrete."

Messing Around With ROBOTS
Part 1

Ron Schroer

Ideas For Weathering Robot Kits

Weathering

my model kits used to represent a compromise between a love for building kits and not having enough time to do a first class job; the weathering covered my mistakes.

Today I still don't have the time to spend weeks on a single kit, but weathering has become much more than an excuse for errors.

Most of my collection is devoted to 1:72 and 1:76 scale tanks from the Second World War, with an emphasis on German armour. Because I enjoy the diversity of the German vehicles and the many options for painting, I found it to be a short step from German armour to the current collections of Japanese robot kits; the different robot collections also offer imaginative designs and many options for presentations.

Because I take photographs of each robot kit I complete, I weather my robots to make them as "authentic" as possible. So far, I've built kits from three collections: Imai's MACROSS range, Bandai's XABUNGLE range, and Nitto's CRUSHER JOE range. Out of these, the MACROSS collection is the largest, with kits of three different sizes at very reasonable prices. The XABUNGLE collection comes in two sizes, while the CRUSHER JOE range offers the simplest kits.

Because of the different sizes and varying amounts of detail offered by these collections, each range presents different challenges for weathering. Generally, however, I use a standard method to weather my robot kits.

Preparations

For me, weathering a model kit is planned and systematic; it's a misconception to believe weathering is an easy way out of producing a "factory fresh" model. Because you can make all of the decisions about a robot's fighting environment (swamp, desert, snow etc), weathering can also be creative.

I don't start weathering a robot until the kit is fully built and painted, because this way I can be sure the weathering will have a uniform appearance. If the kit includes decals, I fix them to the robot prior to the weathering.

I tend to weather a robot over a few days, but I usually gather all of my materials before the first session. I do this both for convenience and to remind me of the methods I've chosen for a particular robot.

Battle Scars

Regardless of the chosen fighting environment, I begin weathering by giving the robot its battle scars (holes, scratches, dents and burns). My improvised tool for this stage is a dead paint brush with a pin pushed through one end (the pin is at a right angle to the brush). I use this tool by heating the pin over a candle flame and then applying the pin to the robot – it's reminiscent of a voodoo ritual.

The plastic used for different robot collections varies in strength, so it may be a good idea to test the robot's resistance to heat. You can do this by lightly running the hot pin along one of the robot's arms or legs – the depth of the resulting scratch is an indicator of the plastic's resistance (Bandai's XABUNGLE range uses particularly soft plastic).

Once you know what sort of punishment the plastic can take, use the hot pin to create small holes in the robot's armour. You can vary the sizes of the holes by gently moving the pin around inside the basic puncture. Removing the pin before it has cooled may result in a string of melted plastic, so wait until the pin can no longer be longer be manoeuvred inside the hole.
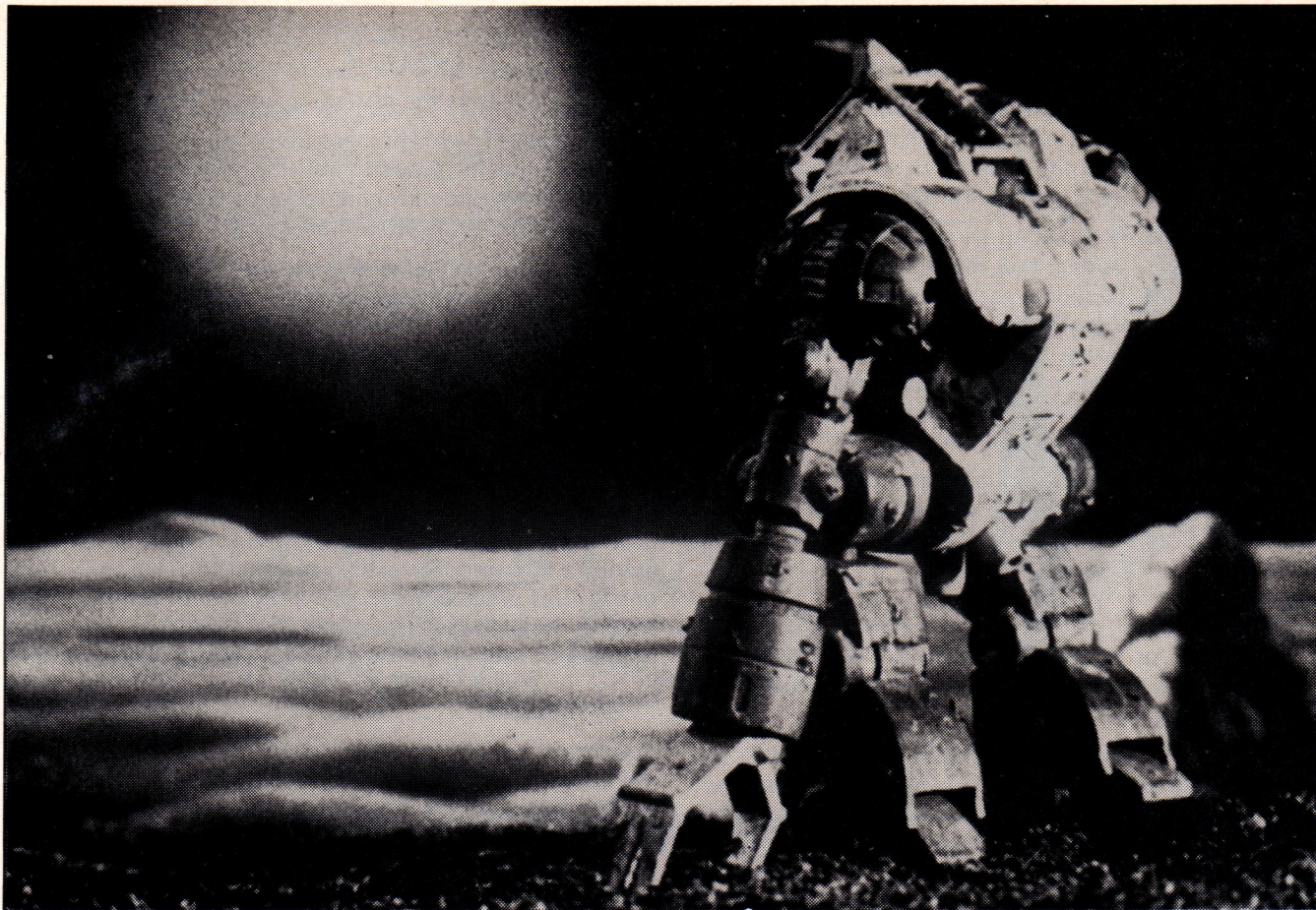
BANDAI XABUNGLE RANGE: 1/144 scale TRAD 11 TYPE.
Model by Ron Schroer   Photographs by Simon Banks/Larry O'Sullivan
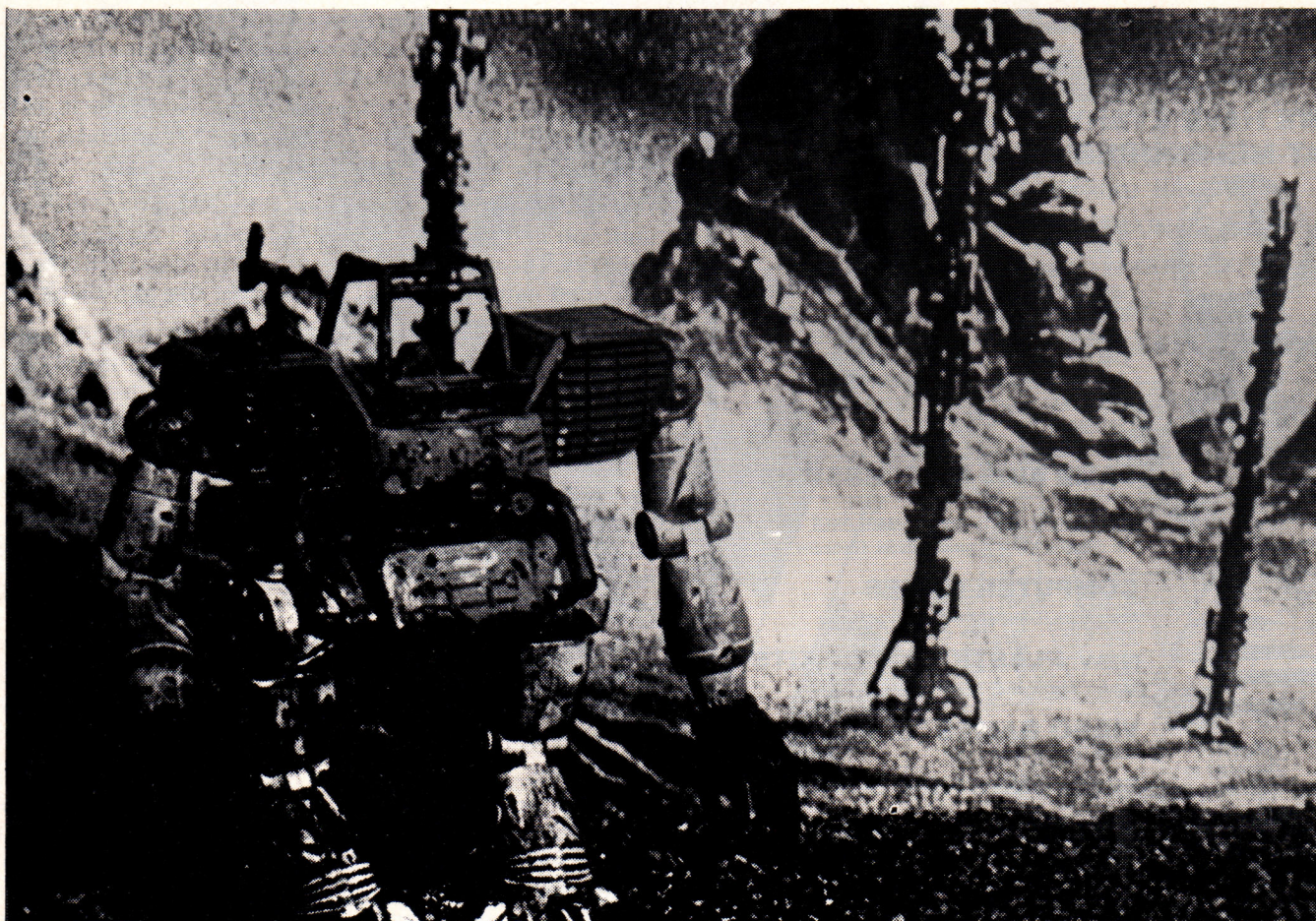
Then it is a simple matter of gently twisting the pin until it breaks loose, leaving the robot with a blackened hole.

Severe battles scars have to be applied in moderation – the robot should look as if it can still function. For this reason, avoid damaging the robot's cockpit, weaponry and exposed engine parts (unless you require a devastated robot for a diorama).

You can produce severe scratches by heating half the pin and placing it lengthwise along the robot; the plastic should immediately melt, resulting in a gash along the armour. If you want to dent and scorch your robot, light a match and let it burn for a moment before blowing it out; quickly apply the burnt end to the robot and wait for the match to cool. The result is a savage and convincing dent, complete with scorch marks (the match-head usually leaves behind a black covering).

When you feel the robot has enough battle scars, brush away any loose black residue left by the pin and matches, and use your modelling knife to cut away any strings of melted plastic from the scars.

Ageing

Giving the robot an overall "burned" or "scorched" look improves the appearance of its battle scars and makes it look older.

For a small robot (from the XABUNGLE or CRUSHER JOE collections), about six matches will provide a good coat. Burn two-thirds of each match, and when they're cool use each one as you need it. By gently breaking a match at the point where it stopped burning, you can make a short-lived but effective pencil for those parts of the robot which are difficult to get to; in this way, you should be able to coat all of the robot's surface. By crushing the burnt part of each match against the robot, you can rub in the resulting powder for a convincing and enduring cover. Some of the powder won't cling to the paintwork, so constantly brush or blow away the residue to keep track of your progress.

This coating will highlight many of the battle scars, because the damaged sections of plastic will stop your finger from rubbing the powder into the surrounding paintwork; the result is a small, relatively clean circle around each scar.

When you are satisfied with the extent of the coating, you can give it a "smoother" appearance by rubbing the robot with a damp handkerchief. This process removes some of the coating, but also gives it a more natural appearance.

For coating larger kits (especially the MACROSS collection), a faster but admittedly unwise method is to set fire to a piece of sprue and hold the robot over the rising smoke. This black, greasy smoke will cling to the robot for a similar appearance to the previous method, but be warned that the smoke is potentially dangerous. If you do decide to burn sprue, do it outdoors in a wind-free place and keep your face away from the smoke. This procedure will give a large robot a fairly consistent coating, but always remember the dangers of the process. Afterwards, use a paint brush to spread the coating around.

Dry-brushing

Apart from applying small scratches, rust, oil and dirt stains, the dry-brush technique is ideal for touching up the robot's battle scars and adding a few more years to its appearance. The smaller the robot is, the smaller your brush should be and the less paint you should use; rushed or sloppy work will ruin the previous stages of weathering. When you've finished dry-brushing, further blackening with burnt matches will take the shine out of the paint.

Using Dirt

If you've chosen a swamp or desert environment for your robot, you can take the weathering one step further. Apart from rolling the robot around in a box of fine dirt (lending the robot a dusty appearance), you can use dried mud to add authenticity to your fighting machine. Since you're working on a scale model, the soil must be very fine and thoroughly sifted.

You may have to experiment with different parts of the garden until you find the type of mud that doesn't crumble into dirt once dry. The mud I use becomes very hard, so I can chip away at a dried patch until I feel it's the right size and shape.

You can use an old brush or your modelling knife to apply a patch of mud to the robot; the mud should be reasonably wet so that it clings to the surface. A fan heater will dry the mud in a few minutes, and then you can modify the various patches you've applied.

By this stage, some of the decals may have come loose; patches of mud applied to the edges will hold them fast. You may also find it useful to dip a brush in some muddy water and paint the robot with the mixture; once dry, the streaks of light dirt look most convincing.

Weathering a robot for snow is an article in itself, but essentially my procedure involves dry-brushing the robot with white paint and using a cotton ball to apply talcum powder while the surface is still tacky.

Weathered robots are ideal for imaginative battlefield dioramas, and most suitable for special effects photography. Weathering can also add a degree of detail not present in the original kit. Despite often being messy and time-consuming, weathering can be an enjoyable and creative process, especially when it's utilized for a model kit where you make the rules.

KIT REVIEW

Mervyn Beamish

Crusher Joe

If you were looking for a starting point for SF modelling you could not go far wrong with the Crusher Joe series. The models are imaginative, inexpensive and simple to build.

The range of topics includes *Dongo* a cute little robot, tanks and other vehicles, specialised weaponry such as *Skate Boy* and battle ships and dreadnoughts such as *Cordoba*. Scale ranges from 1/5000 for the larger ships to 1/16 for robots.

The first noticeable thing about these kits is the packaging design. NITTO are definitely seeking impulse sales with the Crusher Joe series and these beautifully illustrated and colourful packages are almost collectables by themselves. If there is a complaint in this department it is the lack of English language text giving the modeller a little background on the item.

The average model comes in a small box with instructions printed in Japanese inside the cover. The instructions are well illustrated and easy to follow but I do feel that even a little photocopied slip with English translations would help.

The plastic parts contained in the box come in one, two or three assemblies sealed in a bag. These parts are well cast and I found fitted together with only the occasional minor adjustment. With few exceptions the colour of the plastic matched the packaging illustration.

Some boxes included a full colour illustrative leaflet of the 20 or so kits in the range and also decals. However these items seemed to be packed randomly with the kits and it is hard to say whether a kit was meant to has decals or if they were accidently left out during packaging.

Scratch builders of the kit bashing variety should find this series ideal and exciting being affordable and adaptable.

Comment

Very good value, imaginative and habit forming. A little dissapointing about the minimum use of English in the packaging and instructions but good value.

But who is Crusher Joe? A Japanese comic and TV character. The series is similar to our *Starforce* TV series.

Kit: Crusher Joe (approx 20 in series)
Producer: NITTO of Japan
Distribution: Dawn Trading Pty Ltd
Price: From $2.25 to $3.60
Available: Widely available through Hobby and toy outlets.

SCALE ANIME COLLECTION 1 16 SCALE
C TAKACHIHO & A.A NIPPON SUNRISE TAKARA

DONGO

MABOTドンゴ
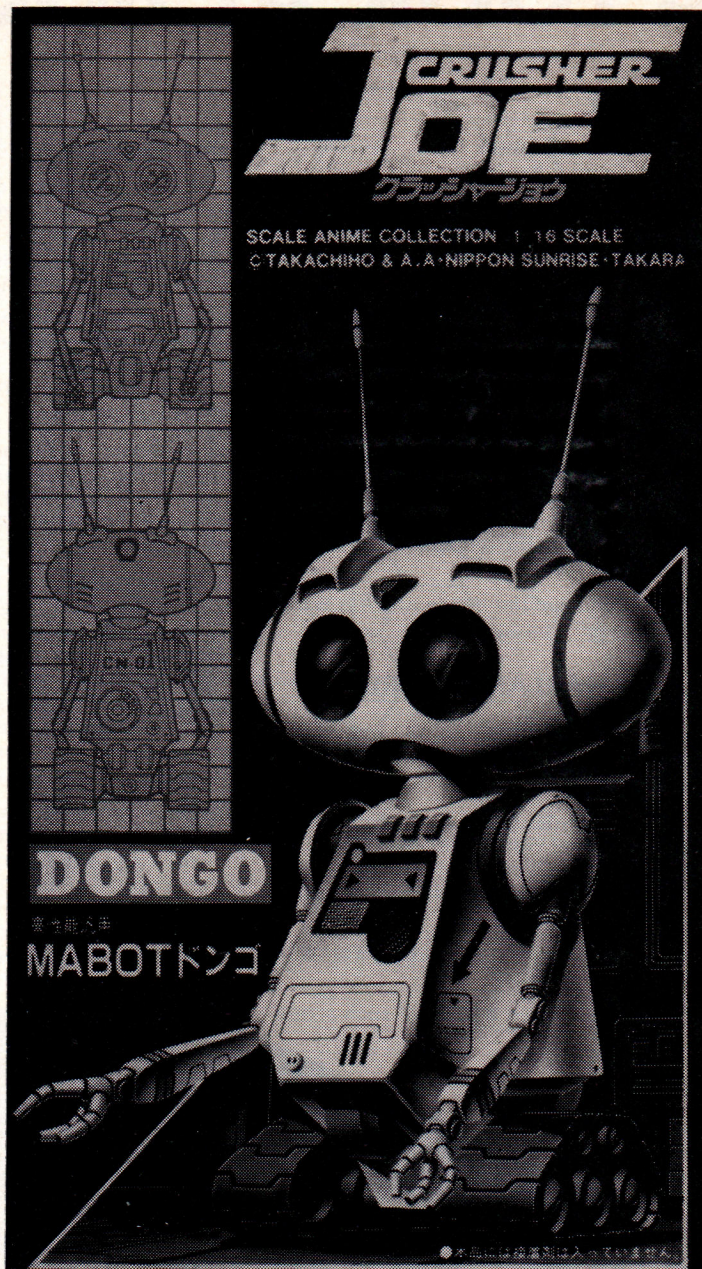
Detailed instructions shown below come from the Space Ship CORDOBA.

❶ 図を見て正しく組み立てます。

反対側も同じように
取り付けます。
A8(A9)

取り付けます。

*SKATE BOY
from the Crusher Joe Scale Animal
Collection No. 2.*

❸ 図を見て間違えないように正しく組み立てましょう。

A13　A14　A26　A25　A22
A3　A4　A25
A12　A1　A23
(A2)　A25
反対側も同じように
取り付けます。　A6(A5)　A11
B1
B3
図のダボを船体の下側
の穴に入れます。
B2　〈スタンド〉
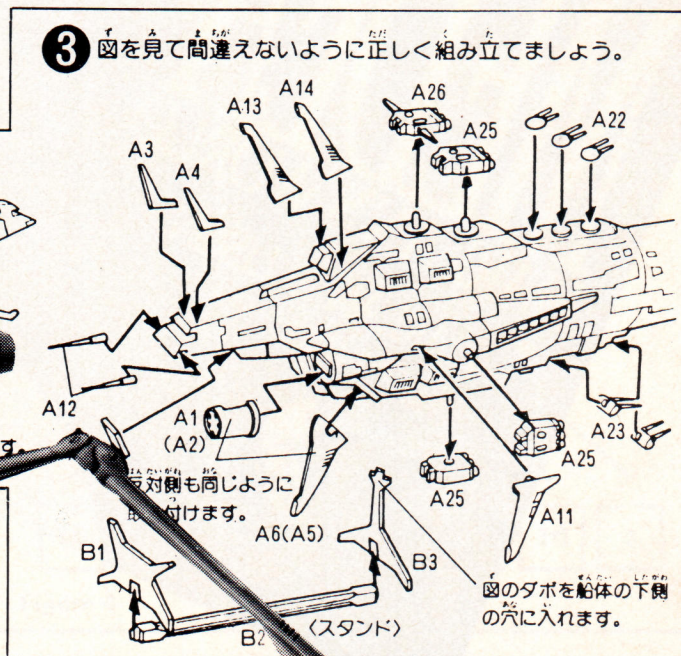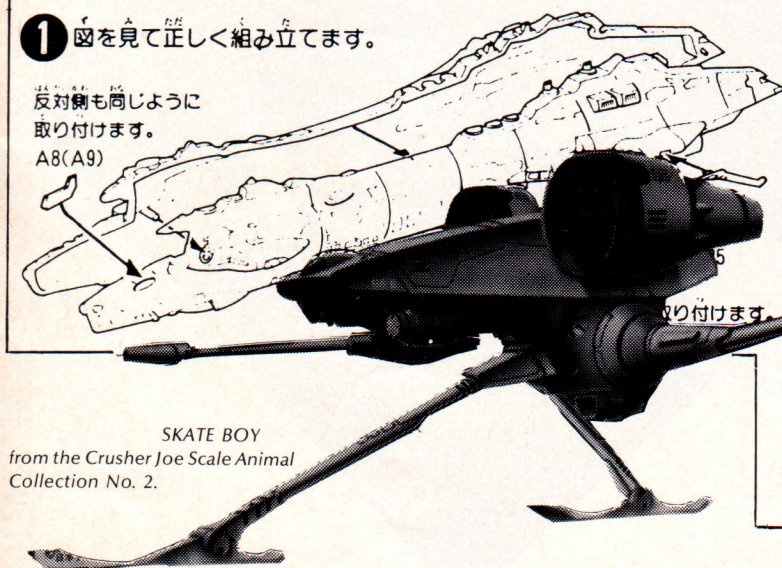
A LOOK AT BOOKS

with surreptitious remarks by Neil Churches

STARMAN

Author: Alan Dean Foster
Publisher: Corgi & Bantam
Price: RRP $4.95

The Stranger – he came to observe life on earth – that's what happens when a peace-loving alien takes the friendly invitations we send into space seriously. But the U.S. Air Force shot down the starman's ship, and now he has to clone the body of a human being just to stay alive. Armed with a smattering of earthly lore (how to say hello in Chinese, the Stones "Satisfaction") collected from Voyager II, as well as his own mind-boggling extraterrestrial powers, he will set off with a beautiful young earth woman on what will become the greatest adventure of their lives-a dangerous flight across America into the unexplored territory of interplanetary love...

N.C. – Go and see the movie which is warm, cute and joyful.

MEDEA: HARLAN'S WORLD

Edited by: Harlan Ellison
Publisher: Corgi & Bantam
Price: RRP $10.95

Tired of the everyday grind? Ever dream of a life of high adventure? Want to get away from it all? Escape the four walls of today! Let a dozen bold dreamers take you on a whirlwind tour of Medea: Harlan's World.

A world 5 billion years in the making, a book 10 years in preparation!

Never has there been a book of such scope.

Galileo would stand in awe, Einstein would marvel, Carl Sagan may shout with joy...

As the legend becomes reality, as a decade of creativity is gathered in more than 500 pages of unparalleled adventure on a planet more mysterious than Mars, more dangerous than Dune, more beguiling than Barsoom.

Envisioned by award-winnning author and anthologist Harlan Ellison, fashioned expressly for your amazement and delight by an incomparable team of scientists, futurists, authors and artists:

Poul Anderson, Hal Clement, Thomas M. Disch, Harlan Ellison, Kelly Freas, Frank Herbert, Larry Niven, Frederick Pohl, Robert Silverberg, Theodore Sturgeon, Kate Wilhelm, Jack Williamson.

N.C. – This book has an impeccable pedigree, writers, artists, marketing whizz people of great renown all pooling their energies to create a new world in their imaginations. It suffers a little from the committe approach however with moments of brilliance to moments of turgid pseudo jargon. The book is a little clinical and scientific which tends to overpower the imaginative spark of the authors as individuals.

Medea is however a worthy effort, it is a valuable exercise and an excellent work book for writers and game designers. Although a little sterile a genuine must for your SF library. (ED – We hope to have a full review in a future issue. I believe this will soon become a collectors item i.e. rare in supply and well sort after.)

DARWATH TRILOGY BOOK 1

THE TIME OF THE DARK

Author: Barbara Hambly
Publisher: Unwin Paperbacks

For several nights Gil had found herself dreaming of an impossible city where alien horrors swarmed from underground lairs of darkness. She had dreamed also of wizard Ingold Inglorion.

Then the same wizard crossed the Void to seek sanctuary for the last Prince of Dar and revealed himself to a young drifter, Rudy. But one of the monstrous, evil Dark followed in his wake and in attempting to help Ingold, Gil and Rudy were drawn back into the nightmare world of the Dark. There they had to remain – unless they could solve the mystery of the Dark.

Then, before they could realise their fate, the Dark struck!

N.C. – A very good story that lives and breathes with great warmth. I must confess that after I read the first few chapters I thought to myself, not another turgid fantasy soap opera. This is perhaps being unfair to those chapters as already the authors humour is flashing through. It is humour, warmth of personalities and the incongruities of two worlds colliding into an interesting story that make this book worthwhile.
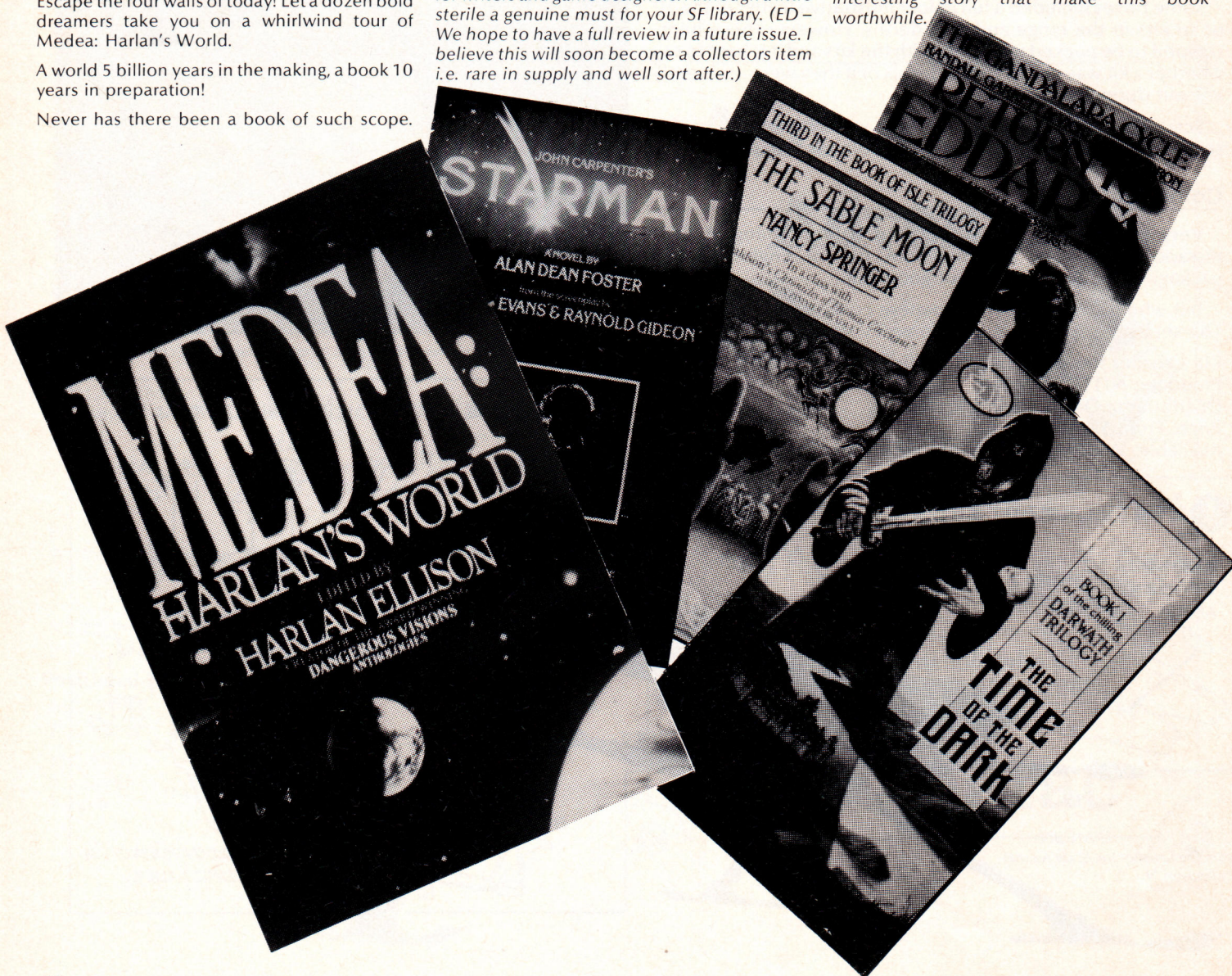
THE GANDALARA CYCLE
RETURN TO EDDARTA

Authors: Randall Garrett & Vicki Ann Heydron
Publisher: Corgi & Bantam

Their mission to the lost city of Ka a resounding success, Rikardon and Tarani begin a long trek across Gandalara. Their journey leads them to a savage conflict with the ape-like vineh, a bittersweet reunion in Raithskar, and, at last, to their goal: Eddarta, seat of government. There, Tarani must call upon more strength and determination than she has ever summoned in her life to face off against the treachery of the wicked High Lord Indomel for her rightful place on Eddarta's throne.

N.C. – This is the product of husband and wife; a collaboration between two professional writers. The publicity promises an "updated Arabian Nights fantasy". Well it does have the desert sands, swords and sorcery with a bundle of friendly and unfriendly creatures that Steven Speilberg would be proud of, but not quite Arabian Nights material. Quite adventuresome and a gripping tale.

THE SABLE MOON

Third in the Book of Isle Trilogy

Author: Nancy Springer
Publisher: Corgi & Bantam
Price: RRP $4.95

Like a misty fog, a dark force rolls over the Isle of Welas. Now proud-hearted Prince Trevyn must embark on a quest to free the Isle of evil's grip and realize his own legendary destiny...

The Sable Moon concludes the magical fantasy trilogy begun in The White Hart and The Silver Sun.

N.C. – This is a beautifully crafted book written by a lady who knows how to deal with language with flair and imagination, this book has a story of youthful clumsiness and arrogance modulating to culture and civilisation with much adventure on the way. As beautiful a tale to read as any of Ursula le Guins allegories.

Buy this book!

MIDDLE-EARTH ROLE PLAYING

Produced & Distributed by: Crown Enterprises, Inc.

MERP for short, provides the structure and framework for role playing in the greatest
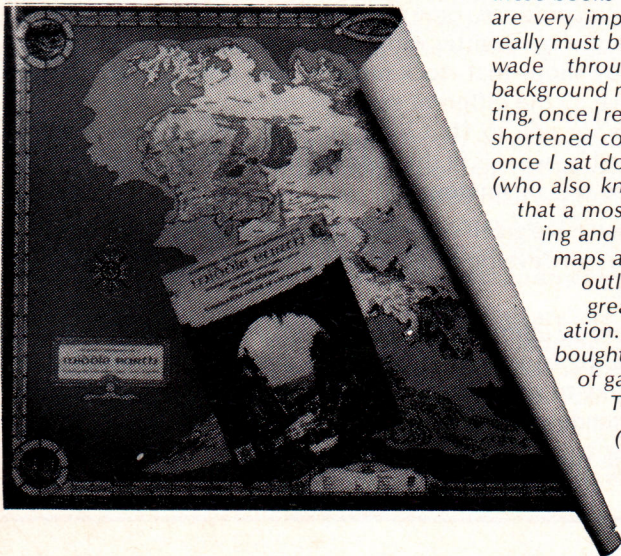
fantasy setting of all time...J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle-Earth.

MERP contains in one book all of the components required to play a fantasy role playing game: a complete character development system covering Hobbits, Elves, Dwarves, etc.; realistic yet playable rules for combat; a simple but comprehensive magic system; detailed guidelines for gamesmasters; and material covering poisons, healing, weather, magic items, Middle-Earth creatures, encounters and much more.

Middle-Earth Role Playing can be used with a wide variety of game aids, including the Middle-Earth Guidebook and Poster/Map, a series of specific adventure modules, a series of general campaign modules, and Rolemaster, Iron Crowns FRP game system.

The campaign modules will include:
● ANGMAR, Land of the Witch King
● UMBAR, Haven of the Corsairs
● ARDOR, in Southern Middle-Earth
● NORTHERN MIRKWOOD, the Wood-Elves Realm
● SOUTHERN MIRKWOOD, Haunt of the Necromancer
● ISENGARD, and Northern Gondor
● ARTHEDAIN, Last Free Kingdom of the North
● MORIA I, the Dwarven City

The adventure models will include:
● BREE and the Barrow-Downs
● DAGORLAD and the Dead Marshes
● CIRITH UNGOL and Shelob's Lair
● HILLMEN of the Trollshaws

N.C. – From a complete novice's point of view these books on role playing in Tolkiens world are very impressive, and overwhelming. You really must be interested in wanting to play to wade through the rules. The historical background notes and illustrations are fascinating, once I reached the rules my attention span shortened considerably. This is not to say that once I sat down with other interested parties (who also knew nothing about these games) that a most enjoyable weekends skullbashing and mindzapping did not follow. The maps are beautifully detailed as are the outlines of play showing ultimately a great respect for the players imagination. If there are more of these to be bought I might start playing these sorts of games regularly and I haven't read Tolkien in years.

(ED – Neil shows distinct signs of catching the bug!)

THE DRAGON WAITING
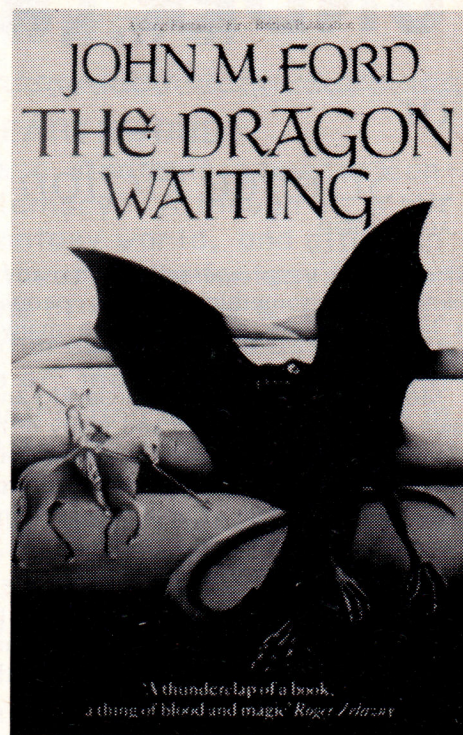
Author: John M. Ford
Publisher: Corgi & Bantam
Price: RRP $6.95

1478: the dawn of the Renaissance. The Wars of the Roses have put Edward IV on the English throne. Lorenzo the Magnificent's brilliant Florentine court is blossoming on the stupendous wealth of the Medici family. Leonardo da Vinci is at work on his astonishing anatomical studies. But all is not quite as it should be. For this is a changed world.

Across Europe, the forces of darkness, magic and rebellion are gathering, bringing the Vampire Duke of Milan, an exiled heir to the Byzantine throne and a young woman physician closer to confrontations that will involve Richard, Duke of Gloucester, Louis XI of France and a plotting wizard spy. And meanwhile, in the Welsh hills, Hywel Peredur watches the Red Dragon rise again to free his country from the White Dragon of England.

And the Dragon is waiting for each of them...

N.C. – This is another form of successful fantasy. A well written historical novel with a dash of magic to spice the recipe to taste. Once again a book written by someone who respects and creates a beautiful language, this is set at a turning point in Western civilization, the first glimpses of the Renaissance. Instead of starting splashily into some court in Italy however, we are gently introduced to the magical foothills of Wales, where a young boy is suffering all the usual adolescent traumas. The dialogue is honest, the imagery breathtaking. Once again I will say no more except, buy this book!

SCIENCE FICTION MODELLING UNDER (RADIO) CONTROL

or

....Science Fiction Modelling on the move

ALEX WOOD

SF modelling has progressed from its early experimental days in films to being something that many people get involved with as a leisure activity and there are many different levels of involvement.

Most modellers buy commercial kits and build them to their own degree of perfection and many of these people eagerly await the arrival of any new kit on the market. For some this is not enough and they prefer to make models from handbuilt parts and pieces taken out of context from shop bought kits. A natural progression from scratch building SF models is to make them move or perform some functions.

One of the easiest ways of achieving this is to employ the technology of radio or remote control and so I will attempt to give you some basic information about this equipment and a few ideas of how it could be utilised.

The three basic components of radio control equipment are:-
1. Transmitter
2. Receiver
3. Servos

The transmitter is just that – a radio transmitter that translates the movements of the joy sticks and switches into radio signals which are picked up by the receiver. The transmitter and reciever are turned precisely to each other by a pair of crystals, one in each unit.

The cheapest and easiest to control are two channel units which allow you to perform two functions eg. steering and throttle for a car. However one channel with a bit of imagination can perform more than one function as I will attempt to show. There are also units with many more channels but these become proportionately more expensive and it is difficult to control everything all at once.

The servos are the units which do the actual mechanical work. They plug into the receiver and take the signal into an amplifier which then drives a small motor and this movement goes through five step down gears to achieve 120 degrees total movement approximately at the output shaft of the servo. (Fig 1)

This output can be made into the kind of movement you want by utilising servo horns, different horns will achieve different types of movement when used in conjunction with different angles of servo set-up and different linkage systems.

The technology and mechanics of radio control as it pertains to planes, yachts and cars has been developing over a period of many years and so there is a good array of linkages and other such systems available at hobby shops. For example a retractable under carriage system for a model plane transposes very well to a space vehicle where it could be used to retract landing gear or maybe as a system for moving weapons in and out of the main body of the vehicle.

A servo movement could be used to turn on a series of switches so that you could turn on an array of lights for example (Fig 2).

As the wiper arm moves across the face of the switches each one will be triggered independently. You could therefore wire up a series of small bulbs or LED's (flashing or otherwise) to achieve the desired effect as you move the joystick on the transmitter.

Another idea would be to turn gun turrets. Suppose you had two gun turrets on either side of the vehicle (as the Millenium Falcon does) then with one servo you can set up a system that will turn both turrets as shown in Fig 3.

This system translates the movement of the servo into a push me – pull you idea, so as the servo moves, the linkages will pull one turret in one direction and push the other one in the other direction.

A little look at the principle of levers will show you that the single movement of a servo can be made into two different types of movement. As an example you could steer a vehicle and move something like a dish on top of the vehicle.

To achieve this you take the movement in the same plane as the servo through linkages as needed to operate the steering and then set up linkages that change the movement into another plane (as shown in Fig 4) to move your dish.

These are just a few ideas of how to utilise servo movement. They can of course be combined to provide even more interesting results, for example if you had retractable landing gear or guns you could make lights come on when they were extended and all you would need would be a simple contact switch at the extremity of the servo movement to turn the lights on.

The possibilities are endless and limited only by the limits of your imagination. As you can see efficient use of a two channel system can produce some spectacular results. You can pick up a two channel transmitter with receiver and servo for about $120 at Hobby shops that stock radio control gear and they should also have all the different servo horns and some basic linkage systems for you to start with but don't allow yourself to be restricted by what is in the shops, there really are endless ways to utilise this technology.

I hope I have given you some basic ideas of how to use servos that you can develop and refine to produce some interesting SF models.

I would be interested to hear about your modelling and more than happy to answer any queries about radio control if you would like to write to me c/o Pandora Magazine, KIM BOOKS, 82 Alexander Street, Crows Nest, NSW 2065.

All the best in Modelling.

One of the smallest (note comparison to dollar coin) servos on the market made by JR with a few different servo horns.
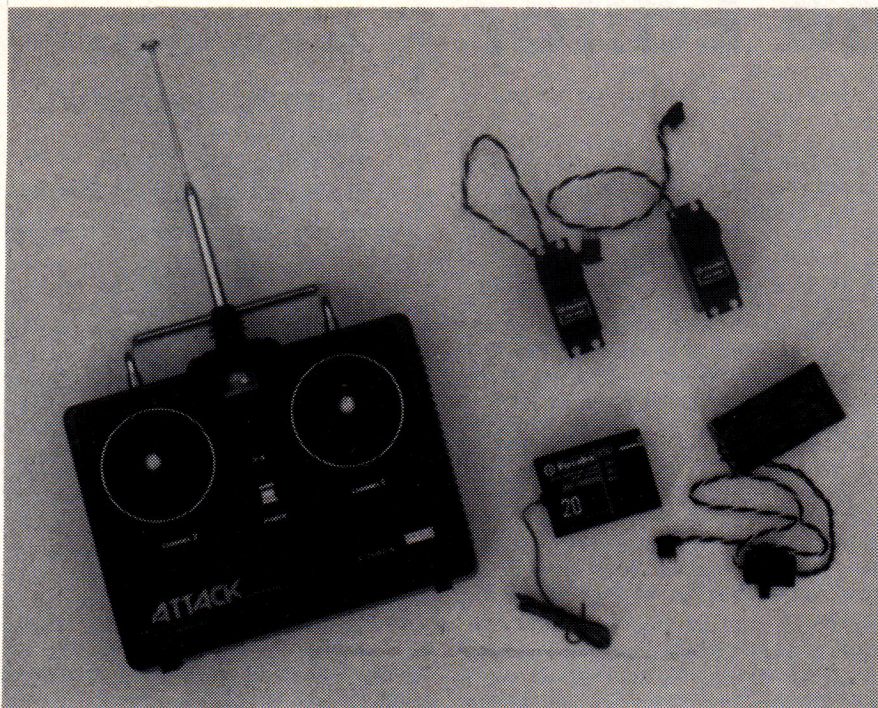
The Futaba Attack two channel system is one of the cheapest on the market. Transmitter left, two servos top right, receiver bottom centre and battery harness with switch bottom right for powering the receiver and servos.

Figure 1

120°

servo output

Figure 3

servo

servo horn

linkages

gun turrets

Figure 2

metal wiper arm attached to servo horn.

series of contact switches

Figure 4

original plane of movement

servo horns

linkages

new plane of movement

servo

Letters to the Editor

ISSUE 1

Dear Mervyn,

Finagle be praised! I have just read the 'first' issue of Pandora, and think it is long overdue. I will be sending a subscription under separate cover – this is strictly a rave. As a denizen of a distant and forsaken place, I keenly feel the need for information on PBM's, as they are about the only way I can keep in touch with the rest of the gaming multiverse. I welcome the promised series on modelling, as a lapsed scratch-builder. You may well inspire me to take up the craft again!

I like Mr Armintrout's games, and I think that Dragon Run may well be one of his best. However, I hope that you avoid the trap that Ares fell into trying to publish a game each issue. I hope that you will only publish a game when it is of a quality to enhance the reputation of your magazine, and will avoid the temptation of sacrificing the cash-flow to the cause of game publishing in magazines.

A few constructive criticisms in order, I feel. The printing and graphics are excellent, but the photographs are not reproduced at all well. Having had some professional training in photography, I recommend that you only select photographs of higher contrast for reproduction, and that your printer consider using a different half-tone screen. Also, please DO MORE PROOF READING. Your magazine is too good to allow it to be spoiled by the rash of misprints which plagued some articles in the first issue. I hope that you take these comments in the spirit in which they are meant. PANDORA is too good to spoil even slightly, if the problems can be corrected.

All in all, I feel that you have produced a very good first issue, and hope you can continue at this quality, or even improve it. In the name of UL, Kdapt, and Finagle, I bless you. May the Storm Bull lend more power to your pen.

Yours Faithfully,
J. Andrew, Brisbane

ED – And may the same deity drop plentiful blessings upon your head.

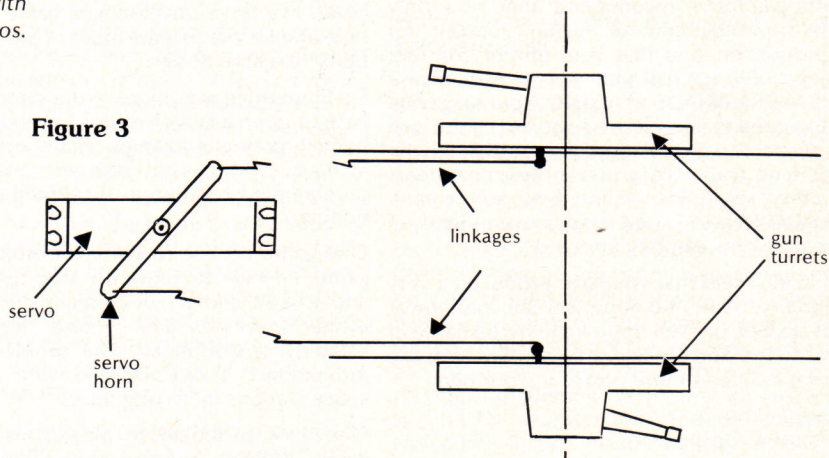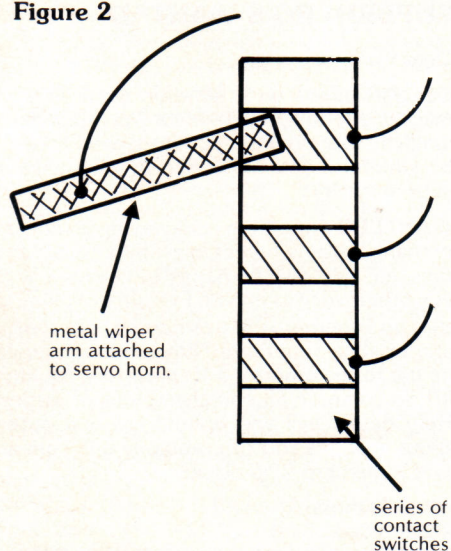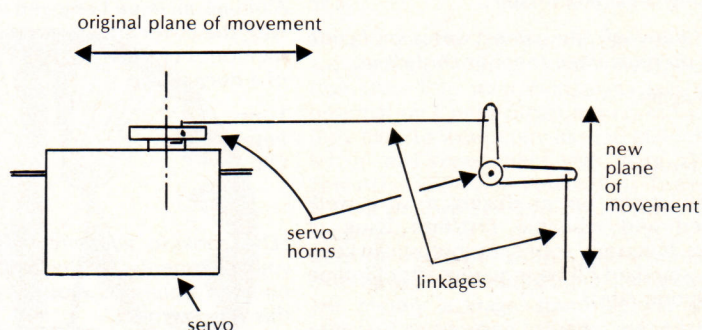*Yes I do take your comments in the spirit in which they are meant and thanks greatly for your interest. We will be endeavouring to publish games whenever possible but are not promising 'a-game-an-issue'.*

If you know of any games writer or fiction writers do encourage them to contact us.

Thanks again.

Dear Mervyn,

Congratulations on producing a very well-balanced and readable first/fifth issue of Pandora. If you and your contributors can keep up this standard I'll be inquiring after lifetime subscription rates.

Cameron Thomas is an excellent choice as PBM editor. With his vast experience and encyclopaedic knowledge of this field he should be able to provide the definitive viewpoint. I don't know how he gets the time or money to gain such in-depth knowledge but I'd wager that he represents a significant percentage of Australia's PBM market.

(### Warning ### Cameron is a genuine REd Alert game menace. The Get Cameron Thomas Fan Club is long overdue. Picture Cameron dead on his feet after an all-night party. He rolls along to the local games club, joins three experienced players in a game that he's never seen before and gradually dozes off. His empire stagnates for three hours whilst he crashes on bare boards in a corner of the hall. He totters back and wins the game in a couple of moves. This man is a danger to society.)

Halley's Comet was timely and informative. I'd like to see more such articles, if for no other reason than that they might provide an idea for a game or scenario.

Dragon Run looks good. Perhaps simpler counter graphics would have been more successful, maybe silhouettes instead of line drawings.

In Play By Mail Cameron has left out CRE Games, which is surprising, as he's been playing their Greyhawk for some years and they've recently released a couple of new games.

The Design of PBM Games struck close to the heart. I've been developing a game for some time and I'd like to learn more of the "nuts and bolts" of game design.

Do Something! was more of the same stuff. I'd hate to open a can of worms, but I doubt that human-moderated games of any sort (face-to-face or PBM) can compete with well-programmed computers. It seemed to lack an ending...

One game I'd like to see is an orbit invasion game. I'd love to guide my starship troopers and assault carriers in through the enemy's orbital fortresses and ground defences to establish a worldhead. The problem of co-ordination is a very real one, with ships and space stations in varying orbits.

One day I'll be looking for playtesters for a PBM game. Perhaps Pandora could set aside a special corner for news of such new ventures. A PBM game needs a far-flung team of players to work out communication difficulties. It's nice to have friends playing one's game, but they might shy away from providing the brutally frank feedback required.

All-in-all, an issue I enjoyed immensely. By the way, the cover art was good and brought back memories of Chris Foss's SF paperback covers of a decade ago.

Yours,
Peter Mackay
Qld.

ED – Thanks for your encouragement Peter and your comments on the magazine have been noted. Cameron is mounting a Libel Suite at this very moment.

We did leave out CRE but, as you will no doubt see, corrected the situation in this issue. By all means we will help you locate play tester for your PBM game and we'd like to review it in PANDORA.

PBM Games

Dear Mervyn,
Firstly, congratulations on the PANDORA effort. It looks to be most interesting and I wish you all the best.

The excerpt for PBM Games, however requires a certain amount of update which is enclosed herein.

Yours Gamely
Lex Young

ED – Thanks Lex it was our fault that this information did not get updated last issue. Hope this will correct the records.

PBM Games P.O. Box 83 Mt Eliza, Vic 3930

Formed by PBM veteran A.D. Young, PBM Games is dedicated to the design and operation of original and highly innovative computer moderated games. PBM Games are currently running a Fantasy Role-Playing game entitled Ringquest and will shortly release a SF tactical slugfest called Ringwarp.

Ringquest: 50 players, Fantasy Role-Playing, 2wk T/A, Setup $10.

An unique PBM game that succeeds extremely well in replacing the normal role-playing GM with a computer. Players start by designing their own party of up to 7 characters, and choosing a secret quest from the list available. Interaction between player and non-player characters is high, and with the vastness of the Ringworld, player diplomacy becomes a must. Fully computer moderated, with text based printouts, Ringquest is a superbly designed game that must appeal to all role-players.

SUPERHERO'S WANTED

Dear Pandora,

Congratulations on a fantastic game in your magazine, a delight to behold. The magazine is fantastic too! Well done!! A welcome. I would be grateful if you would put the following in your magazine:

WANTED!! Superhero role-playing gamers to exchange villains, heroes, organisations, adventures, etc. Will also be happy to converse with you others such as myself. I would be willing to start up Superhero PBM with some help and/or join existing Superhero PBM games. (It could be fun to see others V & V characters, couldn't it?) So come on all you champions of justice! Help defeat evil and uphold law and order. Write now "As you can probably tell, I am an avid Superhero RPG player.

Yours Faithfully,
Richard Scott
11 Millicent Street, Leongatha, Victoria 3953.

GAMES CLUB

Dear Sir,

In response to your magazine's request for clubs to register in your magazine, I would like to give you our clubs listing. The relevant information is set out below in an easy to understand format. I am the club President and my address is the usual mailing address.

The information:-

Name: The Hexagon Society.
Meets: By mail and by arrangement at member's homes.
Plays: Traveller and assorted wargames (1939 onwards especially).
Fees: $2.00 per year.
Requirements: Ages 13 - 16.
Contacts: Gerard Shea (President), 189 Oxley Highway, Port Macquarie, N.S.W. 2444 and Salvo Sidoti, 28 Bourne St., Lighthouse Beach, Port Macquarie, N.S.W. 2444.

Our club does not at present have a newsletter but we are hoping to get one soon, and when we do we will place you on our mailing list. Finally, I would like to thank you for creating another fine magazine for Australian and local gamers, and I hope you receive the support you deserve.

Yours Faithfully,
Gerard Shea
(President of The Hexagon Society).

ED – This is an open offer to all modelling, games and computer users clubs. Register with Pandora and put us on your mailing list for newsletters etc. and we will give the group a free subscription to Pandora. Don't forget to tell us all relevent information and membership numbers etc.

You show us your and we'll show you ours!.
Good luck with the new club.

GAME SCENARIO

Dear Mervyn,

Firstly congratulations on an excellent magazine. Finally there is an Australian publication on Sci/Fi Gaming and modelling. Pandora is a magazine I have long awaited. Your magazine is well balanced and interesting. Well done!

Secondly, I have enclosed a submission for your second Competition (page 16 of Issue 1). It is a scenario introduction of an imaginary world I have name Thalax. This scenario is an adaption of a book I have been working on for some years. It is not a straight Advanced Dungeons and Dragons™ scenario. Hopefully it is much broader and less restricted (and more interesting) than D&D™.

Thalax has been almost fully mapped and documented by myself and I have found it surprisingly easy to adapt the story to a role playing system.

I hope that this is the sort of material you are looking for and I look forward to reading your next issue.

Best of Luck,
Yours Sincerely,
D.A. Willis (Danny)

ED – Thanks and yes this is the type of material we are looking for. Why not let us have a look at the game with the possibility of publishing it in PANDORA.

Unfortunately THALAX was received too late for this issue we will publish it in issue 3.

DESIGNER'S NOTES

W.G. Armintrout

I got my commercial start with the sale of a game review to SPACE GAMER magazine back in 1978. The next year the magazine's parent company, Metagaming, published my first two game designs in their Microgame line: *ONEWORLD*, a fantasy game of dueling gods; and *HOT SPOT*, a sci-fi conflict on a molten battlefield.

I drifted away from the industry, until a fellow named Steve Jackson bought the old magazine and started his successful game company. His magazine editor coaxed me into a contributing editorship. That turned out to be delightful fun. I eventually had the opportunity to write my first RPG adventure supplements, as magazine adventures (I'm very proud of this work): *The Fat Man* (espionage), *The Solimar Quest* (fantasy, co-authored with Bill Jackson), *Big Lizzie* (a dinosaur western), and *The Island of Entellope* (with Brent Anderson – a post-WWIII science fantasy).

I also wanted to mention something about the designs you'll be publishing, as each has a special spot in my heart.

HELLBALL* sticks out in my mind as the hardest to design of all my games. I had made myself a contest to see if I could come up with a challenging science fiction game on a tactical level without sacrificing entertainment value. I sunk an incredible amount of math into coming up with the combat values for each unit, intending to make the pieces naturally function the way I wanted them to.

I went through about eight different prototypes for SKY RIDERS (*DRAGON RUN* Issue 1), each with a different movement system or style of map to try to get that feel of sky manouevering. When I finally arrived at the last result I knew it was what I wanted, and it was lightyears different from what I had begun with seven versions before. I had started with the concept of Stopping The Unstoppable Thing (the Dragon), but to make the game different than anything that had gone before I was persistently looking for some way to put that

aerial feel into the game . . . and I think I succeeded. The players will tell.

The third game embarrasses me, because for the life of me I cannot remember the title. Each of these games has gone through a half-dozen changes -- HELLBALL was originally CHENG-SZE, then SLIMELORD, then WAR IN THE SLIME, and now finally HELLBALL after a change in setting. This game began playtest under the working title of REVENGE OF THE BATFANG, a name that I was horribly hounded for by the playtesters. So I changed it to a beautiful title – something to do with night, or darkness – which I just can't seem to remember. *Mr Armintrout is referring to Star Light which will be published in a later issue.*

The one fact that most stands out in my mind about this design is the fictional quality of it. Like many game designers I'm a great science fiction writer who just hasn't written anything yet – for this game I invented an entire universe of spaceships and swordplay, and I hope that the game reflects that feel of book-like depth and atmosphere. The playing pieces represent diverse units, made unique by their values or their special rules – the blind war apes, or the flying lizardmen, and the priests and clerics on each side. I also worked hard to obtain the street fighting in the game, the ebb and flow as forces crush into each other. It may be the most complicated of the three designs, but the complexity lies in the amount of material covered rather than any one thing being overly complicated – once learned, it too plays easily and hopefully rewards the effort players put into it.

* ED – The game HELLBALL is published in this issue under the name of STRIKE FORCE: JOVE (a game of combat within the Jovian atmosphere). I fear that Mr Armintrout will find much changed from his original game – firstly by Christopher Frink of the SPACE GAMER magazine and then our own Brandt Dainow who further developed the game for the Australian conditions. The original games system, however, still stands.

SPIRAL ARM DISASTER

I only, accidentally, left out player thirteen (Mark Anghel – Deathbug Rules ok!) from my list of allies and look what happens.

Mark has a single little scout ship sitting in orbit above my planet. I have two destroyers, one cruiser and three scout ships. In the ensueing battle my total fleet is force to retreat and Mark captures the planet with his tiny little scoutship!

When questioned the GM made this reply:

"Just lucky

Your fleet was on zero percent retreat. If the Scout wasn't killed in the first round of battle, then your fleet would run away. All I can say is that must have been one tough Scout, or I'd get a whole new set of gunnery officers!

Have fun!"

HAVE FUN INDEED!

Mervyn Beamish.

STRIKE FORCE JOVE

In the late twenty-first century a team of scientists investigating Jupiter's atmosphere discovered a unique pocket of life existing in a small area some 500 kilometres below the outer edge of the Jovian stratosphere. The zone, known as the Kelly Pocket (after its discoverer), consisted of a dense layer of primitive proteins floating atop a column of upwelling gases (mainly Nitrogen and Oxygen). Extremely large quantities of free energy (in the form of atmospheric lightning and heat) were present in this area. This was a result of the interaction of Nitrous Oxides with lighter gases of the upper atmosphere. This energy permitted freely existing hydrocarbons in the upper atmosphere to form amino acids.

From these amino acids proteins developed in vast quantities. The head of the column became a viscous black soup of densely packed proteins, so thick as to be almost solid, and approximately 5 miles deep.

Of even greater interest to the commercially minded was the discovery that the great pressures of the Jovian atmosphere caused polymerisation of the proteins into previously unknown varieties of copolmers.

Unmanned probes were dispatched to retrieve sample of these copolymers, and Terran laboratories soon discovered a host of applications for them, especially in plastics manufacture and bio-engineering. Unfortunately, it was quickly discovered that only the unique conditions of the Kelly Pocket would cause the appearance of these chemicals, and attempts to artificially create such conditions were unsuccessful (though research continues to this day).

The result was, of course, the First Jovian War. Groups of commercially backed mercenaries, in specially designed equipment, secretly landed in the Kelly Pocket and attempted to gain control of it for their various consortiums. For many months battles were fought between mercenaries until the Terran government discovered the situation, and intervened (by establishing a state monopoly).

A game of combat within the Jovian atmosphere

Designer

W.G. ARMINTROUT

Additional Developments

USA: . . . . C. Frink
Australia . . . . B. Dainow

Playtesters

USA . . . . Australia

A. Orton   G. Stevens
K. Gross   R.Hittmann
J. Gross   **Tech. Asstance**
D. Levenhagen   P.Jackson
Artwork   D. Elkins

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

STRIKE FORCE: JOVE is a game depicting a theoretical conflict between commercially backed mercenary forces within a region of the Jovian atmosphere. The game postulates the existence of a small area within Jupiter's atmosphere conducive to the creation of structurally primitive life-forms and highly complex chemicals which are commercially valuable in a variety of industrial processes. The great distance from organised government of this region allowed commercial interests to take business competition to its logical extreme, and a small-scale war develops. The game concentrates on the battles taking place within the Kelly Pocket itself, the interaction of a variety of weapon systems, and the unique problems the environment poses for the forces. The scenarios work within this frame-work to elucidate certain tactical aspects and situations that could arise during the course of such a war.

# 2.0 EXPLANATION OF MAP AND COUNTERS

2.1 The Map The map depicts the entire area of the Kelly Pocket, which is bounded by an area of gases hostile to the life forms found within the Pocket. Combat units may leave the map (returning to their bases), but the native life forms will not.

On the map are printed the Protoplants (dark area), which do not move. Protein Rafts are placed on the map by the players, and these can, and will, move.

2.2 The Counters The Counter Sheet includes a variety of combat and non-combat units, as well as utility counters. combat units have a central symbol printed on them depicting their armour status and mode of movement. Four numbers are also printed on them, listing their Attack Strength, Defence Strength, Cost, and Movement Allowance. Weapon type is also printed as a letter on the counter. Range is not printed on the counters because this is a constant.

2.21 Illustrative Summary of Counters

Typical Counter

Attack Strength — Weapon Type — Defence Strength

| 24 | G | 20 |

Armour Status — **G** — Movement Mode

| 20 | | m6 |

Unit Cost — Movement Allowance
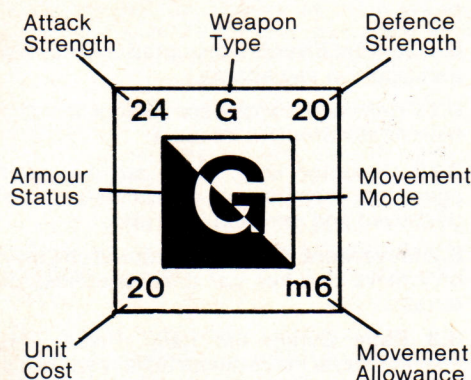
Weapon Type Letters

A = Artillery
H = High Energy (HE)
G = General multi-purpose
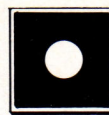S = Sonic

Armour Status and Movement Mode Symbols
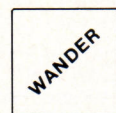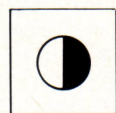
= Infantry

= Tracked Armour
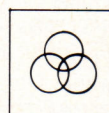
= GEV Armour

= Artillery

Utility Markers

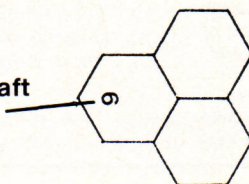WANDER — Wandering Raft

FIRED — Fired Marker

Supply Drop

Meta-plastic

Protein Raft
ID number

3.0 PREPARATION FOR PLAY

3.1 Selection of Scenario Players must select which of the scenarios they will play (see 12.0). They must also decide who will command each side.

3.2 Selection of Units Each player secretly selects his force before setting up the map. The cost of each type of unit is listed under the directions for each scenario.

3.21 The total value of each player's units may not exceed the limit given by the scenario.

3.22 The limits of the counter mix provided with the game may not be exceeded. No new counters may be made up.

3.3 Terrain Set-Up Each player alternatively places one Protein Raft, starting with the player specified by the scenario, until all the Rafts have been placed on the map

3.31 No Protein Raft may be placed on, or adjacent to, any other terrain feature, including the map edge, terrain features include Protoplant hexes and previously placed Protein Rafts.

3.4 Unit Set-Up Players then set up their forces on the map, as directed by the scenario. They are then ready for the first turn.

4.0 GAME-TURN SEQUENCE

The players take turns moving their units and making attacks. The order in which they take these actions is described in this Sequence of Play Outline. One completion of the

Sequence of Play is called a *Game-Turn*. Each *Game-Turn* consists of two *Player-Turns*. Each *Player-Turn* consists of five Phases. Play continues until one player has satisfied his victory conditions or the *Game-Turn* limit (if any) has expired. The player whose turn it is is known as the *Phasing Player*.

4.1 Sequence of Play The *Phasing Player* executes each of the following phases in the order they are listed. When the *Phasing Player* has completed Step Five, his *Player-Turn* is over and his opponent becomes the *Phasing Player* and repeats steps one to five. When his *Player-Turn* is completed, the passage of one *Game-Turn* is recorded.

Step One: Combat Phase
The *Phasing Player* declares and resolves all attacks by his units, and applies the results immediately.

Step Two: Movement Phase
The *Phasing Player* may move any of his units which did not engage in combat that turn. His reinforcements may enter the map.

Step Three: Rally Phase
The *Phasing Player* attempts to rally any of his units which are disrupted.

Step Four: Wandering Raft Movement Phase
Rafts marked with Wandering Raft markers are moved. Other rafts may also move.

5.0 COMBAT PRECONDITIONS

During a Player's Combat Phase, a Player may attack one or more of his opponent's units with some of his units. combat is always voluntary, no unit is ever obliged to attack an enemy unit.

5.1 Range In order for a friendly unit to participate in an attack upon a enemy unit, the target unit (or defender) must be within range of the attacker. Different types of units have different ranges.

5.11 Artillery units have a range of 10 hexes. All other combat units have a range of 2 hexes.

5.12 When calculating the range from the attacker to the defender count the defending unit's hex, but not that of the attacker.

5.2 Line of Sight In order for a unit to attack an enemy unit, the attacking unit must be able to trace a clear and unobstructed Line of Sight to the defending unit. A Line of Sight is a straight line from the centre of the attacker's hex to the centre of the defender's hex.

5.21 Line of Sight is affected only by the terrain through which it is traced.

5.211 If both the attacking unit and the defending unit occupy Protein Floor hexes, Line of Sight is blocked by any intervening Protein Raft or Protoplant hex.

5.212 If the attacking unit occupies a Protein Floor hex and the defending unit occupies a Protein Raft or Protoplant hex, Line of Sight is blocked only by a Protein Raft or Protoplant hex immediately adjacent to the defender.

5.214 If both units occupy Protein Raft or Protoplant hexes, Line of Sight is never blocked.

5.22 A summary of the effects of terrain on Line of Sight may be found on the sheet of tables and charts enclosed with this game.

Protoplant restricts the effectiveness of airborne delivery systems).

6.26 A summary of modifications to *Attack Strength* may be found on the sheet containing charts and tables.

6.3 *Fired* **Markers** All attacking units should have *Fired* markers placed on them to indicate that they have participated in attack. Such units may not move in the Movement Phase.

6.4 *Wander* **Markers** If an artillery unit occupying a Protein Raft participates in an attack, place a *Wander* marker on the Raft. Such Rafts will move due to recoil in the Wandering Raft Phase.

6.41 *Wander* Markers must also be placed on all Protein Rafts containing units that Artillery fired on during the Combat Phase. Such Rafts will also move in the Wandering Raft Phase.

7.0 COMBAT RESULTS

The abbreviations on the Combat Results Table will indicate how the defending units are affected by that attack. A unit will either be unaffected, disrupted, or destroyed as a result of an attack.

7.1 A result of ' – ' on the Combat Results Table means the defending unit is unaffected by the attack.

7.2 A result of **'d'** on the combat results Table means the defending unit is disrupted. Disrupted units are immediately flipped face-down to indicate their new status (exception: see 8.3).

7.3 A result of **"X"** on the Combat Results Table means the defending unit is destroyed. The destroyed unit is immediately removed from the map.

7.31 If the unit destroyed was transporting a non-mobile unit at the time of combat, the transported unit is also destroyed.

8.0 DISRUPTION

A unit may become disrupted as a result of combat or displacement. A disrupted unit is restricted in its movement, and has a reduced combat capability. Disrupted units may attempt to undisrupt (or Rally) in the Rally Phase.

8.1 Combat Effects A disrupted unit may not participate in any attacks.

8.11 Units which attack disrupted units have their *Attack Strength* doubled.

8.12 Disrupted units which are disrupted again (by combat or displacement) are destroyed and removed from play.

8.2 Movement Effects A disrupted unit may only move one hex per turn, regardless of terrain.

8.3 Rally During the Rally Phase, The *Phasing Player* may attempt to Rally any of his units which are disrupted. Units which successfully Rally cease to be disrupted.

8.31 During the Rally Phase the rolls a die for each of his units which is currently disrupted. If the die roll is within the required range for that type of unit, the unit has successfully Rallied, otherwise the unit remains disrupted, and may be destroyed.

8.32 If the unit attempting to Rally is **Infantry**, it will successfully Rally on a roll of a 1, 2, or 3.

5.3 Disrupted Units Disrupted units may never attack.

5.4 Multiple Attacks No unit may attack or be attacked more than once in a single Combat Phase. If the *Phasing Player* wishes to attack a single enemy unit with more than one friendly unit, he must total the modified attack strengths of all his units he wishes to attack the enemy unit with, and conduct a single attack.

GG 5.5 "Non Combat" Attacks It is permitted to launch attacks against Protein Rafts themselves, and for Artillery on Protein Rafts to fire at nothing. Such attacks will cause the Protein Raft in question to move, but will have no other effect. There is no need to roll a dice for such attacks.

6.0 COMBAT RESOLUTION

An "attack" is the comparison of the Attack Strength of a specific attacking force against the defense strength of a specific defending unit. It is resolved by the throw of die in connection with the Combat Results Table. Results are applied immediately.

6.1 Combat Procedure The attacking Player totals up the attacking strengths of all his units participating in the attack, and divides this by the defense strength of the defending unit. The resulting ratio is called Attack Ratio. The Players then locate the column on the Combat Results Chart which corresponds with the Attack Ratio column to obtain a result. The result is then applied to the defending unit immediately.

6.11 If an Artillery unit occupies the same hex as another combat unit, both units must be attacked simultaneously. To do this, add their

defense strengths together before computing the Odds Ratio. The result obtained on the Combat Results Table is applied to both units.

6.12 The Attack Ratio is always rounded off in favour of the defender. Thus, if 21 points of Attack Strength attack 8 points of Defense Strength, the Attack Ratio of 2.625 to 1 is rounded off to 2 to 1.

6.13 Attack Ratios greater than 7 to 1 are resolved on the 7 to 1 column of the Combat Results Table.

6.14 Attacks at Attack Ratios less than 1 to 1 are not allowed.

6.2 Combat Modifications Certain types of weapon are more effective against particular types of troops, and less effective against others. Where such cases occur, they will be reflected in a modification of the attacking unit's Attack Strength.

6.21 Attacks by Beamer-armed units against Infantry result in a halving of the Beamer-armed unit's Attack Strength.

6.22 If a Sonic-armed unit is attacking an Infantry unit, the Sonic-armed unit's Attack Strength is doubled.

6.23 If a Sonic-armed unit is attacking an Armour unit, the Sonic-armed unit's Attack Strength is halved.

6.24 If the defending unit is disrupted, the *Attack Strength* of all attacking units is doubled.

6.25 If the attacking unit is armed with General Purpose weaponry and the defending unit occupies a Protoplant hex, the attacking unit's *Attack Strength* is halved. (The extremely rough surface of the

8.33 If the unit attempting to Rally is **Armour**, it will successfully Rally on a roll of 1 or 2.

8.34 If the unit attempting to Rally is **Artillery**, it will successfully Rally on a roll of 1.

8.35 If the die roll to Rally a unit yields a result of 6, a second die is rolled. If this second roll also yields a result of 6, the unit is destroyed and immediately removed from play.

9.0 MOVEMENT

During the Movement Phase, the may move all, some, or none of his units. Movement is a function of a unit's *Movement Allowance*; the Movement allowance is the number of movement points that a unit may expend each friendly Movement Phase. The *Movement Allowance* of each unit is printed on its counter.

9.1 Basic Procedure Units are moved one at a time, hex by hex, in any direction, or combination of directions that the *Phasing Player* desires.

9.11 The Movement Phase ends when the announces he has no more units he wishes to move.

9.12 A unit may never exceed its *Movement Allowance* under any circumstances whatsoever. Units are not obliged to expend all their *Movement Allowance*, or even to move at all.

9.13 Unused points of *Movement Allowance* may never be saved, loaned, or transferred to other units.

9.14 Units which participated in attacks during the Combat Phase may not move at all during the Movement Phase.

9.15 A unit may never enter the same hex as an enemy unit.

9.16 Units may freely pass through hexes occupied by other friendly units. However, mobile units may never end the Movement Phase in the same hex as another mobile unit. There is no limit to the number of non-mobile units that may occupy the same hex; so long as there is never more than one mobile unit per hex.

9.2 Terrain Effects Different types of unit are better suited to some types of terrain than others for purposes of movement. This is reflected by alterations for the cost in Movement Points for these units to enter the hex containing the terrain in question.

9.21 The cost for a Tracked Vehicle to enter a Protein Floor hex is 2 Movement Points.

9.22 The cost for a GEV to enter a Protoplant hex is 3 Movement Points.

9.23 A Summary of the effects of terrain on movement for different units can be found on the sheet containing tables and charts.

9.3 Disrupted Units Disrupted units may only move one hex during a Movement Phase.

9.4 Minimum Movement Regardless of all other circumstances, a unit which has not attacked in the 's Combat Phase, may always move at least one hex.

9.5 Combat Effects Units which have attacked in the Combat Phase may not move at all.

10.0 TRANSPORT

In certain scenarios, markers are used to represent Supply Drops and Meta-plastics which are not combat units, and may not make attacks or be attacked. They are called non-combat units, all other units are combat units. Supply Drops, Meta-plastics, and Artillery units have no Movement Allowance, and must be transported. They are collectively referred to as non-mobile units. All other units are mobile units.

10.1 Loading Non-mobile units must be loaded by a mobile unit before they may be transported.

10.11 In order for a mobile unit to load non-mobile unit, it must begin its Movement Phase in the same hex as such a unit.

10.2 Transport Costs When transporting a non-mobile unit, a mobile unit has its Movement Allowance halved (round fractions down).

10.21 The reduced Movement is in effect for the entire *Game-Turn*, even if the mobile unit ceases to transport the non-mobile unit during its movement.

10.22 Regardless of terrain costs a mobile unit may always move at least one hex per Friendly Movement Phase (see 9.4).

10.3 Effects of Disruption Disrupted units may not transport non-mobile units.

10.31 If a unit becomes disrupted while transporting an artillery unit, the artillery unit is also disrupted. Supply Drops and Meta-plastics whose transporting unit becomes disrupted are not affected.

10.4 Unloading A mobile unit may leave a non-mobile unit in any hex through which it passes during its movement.

10.41 Non-mobile units may not be moved again in a Movement Phase during which they were transported.

10.42 If a mobile unit expending its last Movement Point in the act of transporting a non-mobile unit, it is deemed to be transporting that unit during the Combat Phase.

10.5 Meta-plastics When a Meta-plastic marker is being transported by a mobile unit which was attacked during the Combat Phase, there is a chance the Meta-plastic unit will be destroyed even if the unit transporting is not.

10.51 Roll a die for each such Meta-plastic unit at the end of each combat in which they were involved. On the roll of a 1, the Meta-plastic unit is destroyed.

10.52 A Meta-plastic unit is automatically destroyed if their transporting unit is destroyed by an 'X' result on the Combat Results Table.

10.53 Meta-plastic units may never be attacked themselves.

10.6 Supply Drops Infantry units may never transport Supply Drops.

10.61 Supply Drops are destroyed only if a unit transporting them is destroyed as a result of a 'X' result on the Combat Results Table.

10.62 Supply Drops may never be attacked themselves.

10.7 Artillery Artillery units are the only form of combat unit which may move (i.e. be transported) in the same *Game-Turn* as it fired.

The Equipment of the First Jovian War

(extract from "Outer Planets Defense Review 2195" by Major F. Brusikov)

The First Jovian War, fought for control of the Kelly Pocket of the Jovian atmosphere over the years 2185-2189, was the first example of the combat in a non-Terran environment. As such it yielded valuable lessons in the strategy and tactics of conflict within hostile terrain. A terrain so hostile in fact, that the environment accounted for greater casualties than combat itself (at least in the early stages). A discussion of the logistics of maintaining units almost 400 million miles from the nearest supply base is beyond the scope of this article, suffice it to say that once units were in the combat zone, they were there to stay.

While little conflict occurred in the Kelly Pocket itself, it is on this area of the war that I shall concentrate. Treatment of the war in the Jovian orbital belt has been adequately dealt with by General Umboto's work "Strategy and Tactics at Orbital Depths".

The mercenary forces of the major combatants (General Bio-dynamics and Pan-African Plastics) used similar equipment and pursued similar tactics.

Ground forces can be best defined by a three-fold analysis of mode of transport, type of defense, and weapons systems.

Four modes of transportation were utilised in the Kelly Pocket; GEV, foot, track, and haulage. Infantry units were invariably on foot, armoured vehicles utilised tracked movement in the early stages, but it was soon discovered that tracked vehicles afforded little purchase on the Protein Floor, which had a tendency to move with the tracks, severely reducing speed. Ground Effect Vehicles (GEV, or hovercraft), were found to be extremely effective across this Floor, but reduced in speed across the Protoplants because of their rough surface. Artillery weapons were deployed amongst existing units, and therefore had no intrinsic transportation capabilities.

Defense consisted of a variety of methods. The traditional Electronic Counter Measures (ECM) were, of course, deployed by all units, with the usual results. GEV's and tracked vehicles were invariably heavily armoured, greatly in excess of environmental requirements.

Infantry squads tended to be more lightly armoured, and utilised Broad Spectrum Energy Screens (BSES) for the main part. Artillery, of course, adopted a combination of weapon shield and BSES.

Armament consisted of a variety of weapons, utilisation of which can be readily divided into 4 groups:
Sonic-based delivery systems (Sonics for short), were utilised by all types of units, and were especially effective against infantry in that BSES does not impede Sonic flow.
Plasma-based and other High Energy weapons systems (HE) were also widely utilised, but these were much less effective against BSES, which is designed to impede any high energy flow, kinetic or otherwise.
Some units, most noticeably infantry, employed a variety of general-purpose (or r GP) armament consisting of a variety of guided rockets and missiles, and target-seeking mines. Artillery was, of course, equipped with a variety of radiation rockets.

10.61 Artillery units are destroyed only if a unit transporting them is destroyed as a result of a 'X' result on the Combat Results Table.

11.0 WANDERING ISLANDS

During the Wandering Rafts Phase, Protein Rafts which Artillery fired to or from during the Combat Phase move; other Protein Rafts may also move of their own volition.

11.1 Raft Selection All Protein Rafts from which Artillery units fired this *Player-Turn* must move during this phase. All Protein Rafts which contained defending units in the Combat Phase must move this turn. (This effect is caused by the radiation rockets used by artillery stimulating the electoplasts – or electricity-generating cells – of the Protein Rafts).

11.11 The *Phasing Player* rolls two dice and consults the Raft Selection Table(11.12). The ID numbers provided by this table indicate the two Protein Rafts which will also move this phase.

11.12

ISLAND SELECTION CHART

		First Die Roll					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
	1	6/2	17/15	1/16	8/6	13/15	18/1
	2	3/11	10/18	8/18	4/3	10/3	1/12
Second	3	7/16	12/11	15/4	5/12	11/5	6/9
Die Roll	4	18/14	8/4	9/2	9/7	10/15	17/3
	5	10/4	6/16	13/7	14/9	1/7	16/2
	6	11/8	7/13	13/5	14/12	17/2	14/5

11.13 A copy of the Raft Selection Chart may be found on the sheet of charts and table enclosed with this game.

11.2 Order of Movement Rafts due to move because of Artillery fire are moved first. Rafts on which units defended in combat move second. Protein Rafts selected from the Raft Selection Chart are moved last.

11.21 Within the restrictions of 11.2, the *Phasing Player* may move Protein Rafts in any order he desires, so long as the restrictions of 11.22 and 11.9 are obeyed.

11.22 Any movement of Protein Rafts caused by collisions must be completed before moving a new Raft.

11.3 Direction of Movement A die is rolled to determine direction of movement. Rafts may move in any of six directions.

11.31 Roll one die and consult the movement indicator (a copy of which is printed on the map). Move the Protein Raft in the direction shown.

11.32 MOVEMENT INDICATOR

```
        1
   6  ✳  2
   5     3
        4
```
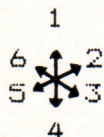
11.4 Distance of Movement Each Protein Raft will move a number of hexes equal to the throw of one die.

11.5 Passengers All units (combat or non-combat) which begin the phase on an Protein

Raft move with it if the Protein Raft moves.

11.6 *Displacement* If a unit is in a Protein Floor hex that a Raft will wander through, that unit must attempt to escape to a safe location. A successful escape is called *Displacement*.

11.61 A mobile unit attempting *Displacement* may move to any Protoplant or Protein Raft hex within its current Movement Allowance, paying normal Movement Point costs for terrain, disruption, and transportation, as applicable.

11.62 Combat units may not Displace to a hex of the Protein Raft which caused them to move in the first place.

11.63 A mobile unit may not Displace to a hex occupied by another mobile unit.

11.64 If there are no available Protoplant or Protein Raft hexes within the mobile unit's current Movement Allowance, the mobile unit sinks below the on-coming Raft (i.e. remains in the same hex, but under the Raft counter). It may remain there indefinitely, taking no part in game-play, until the Protein Raft moves on.

If still submerged at the end of the game, the unit is deemed destroyed (life support systems can't last forever).

11.65 Undisrupted combat units which successfully Displace are disrupted.

11.66 For each disrupted combat unit which successfully Displaces roll one die. On a roll of a 1 or 2, the combat unit is destroyed.

11.67 Combat units undergoing Displacement are always moved by their owner.

11.68 Untransported Artillery units may not Displace, they are destroyed instead.

11.7 Transport and Displacement Should a mobile unit transporting a non-mobile unit be forced to undergo Displacement, the owning player may elect to have the unit cease to transport, in which case the unit may move at its normal Movement Allowance.

11.71 Untransported Supply Drops or Meta-plastics occupying a hex through which a Protein Raft will pass remain in the hex (i.e. under the Protein Raft), and are unaffected. Such units may not take part in game play in any fashion until the Protein Raft moves off them.

11.8 Collisions In many cases a wandering Raft's path will be blocked by either a Protoplant hex, or another Protein Raft. This will cause the Protein Raft to cease moving.

11.81 If the blocking hex is a Protoplant hex, the wandering Protein Raft simply stops, there is no further effect.

11.82 If the blocking hex is another Protein Raft, and the wandering Raft has more than one point of movement left to expend, the blocking island will be set wandering.

11.821 The collision of the two Protein Rafts absorbs one movement factor; remaining factors are transferred to the blocking Raft.

11.222 If more than one Raft was hit, each receives a number of movement points equal to the surplus after collision (note: the remaining movement points are not divided amongst them).

11.823 Each Raft which moves as a result of collision moves in the same direction as the Raft which collided with them.

11.83 If a Protein Raft reaches the edge of the map, it *bounces*.

11.831 A die is rolled for the new direction of the Raft. If the new direction would lead off the map, re-roll.

11.832 Once the direction has been determined, a die is rolled to determine the distance of movement.

11.9 Multiple Movement Rafts which are due to move because of Artillery fire or combat, and which are selected by the Raft Selection Chart to wander, may only move once. The *Phasing Player* must move such units last.

11.91 There is no limit on the number of times a Raft may move as a result of collisions.

SCENARIOS

1. FIGHT FOR THE META-PLASTICS

Background: Meta-plastics, highly complex and valuable chemical compounds, occasionally rise to the surface of the Protein Floor from the lower depths. Their origin is unknown, but they seem to be the waste products of hitherto undiscovered organisms residing in the lower levels of the Kelly Pocket. They have a variety of uses, but are most valuable in the field of bio-engineering as a base for the construction of certain bacteria used in growing artificial organs.

They appear on the Protein Floor as blue-green ovoids approximately 5 meters in diameter, with a clay-like consistency. For unknown reasons they always appear in groups of 9, all at approximately the same time. During the Jovian War their appearance would precipitate a mad scramble amongst the combatants to retrieve them, each side eager to gain the massive bonus their employers offered for their retrieval.

Forces 220 points for each side.

Set-up sequence After both players have secretly selected their forces they should roll to see who shall go first (highest die roll wins). The First Player places the first Protein Raft, and makes the first attempt to move a Raft.

All nine Meta-plastic markers are used in this scenario. The First Player rolls one die. The roll corresponds with the numbers 1-6 on the right portion of the map, and indicates a row in the centre of the map. The Second Player rolls two dice. The total of these dice corresponds with the numbers 2-12 on the upper portion of the map, and indicates a column in the centre of the map. A Meta-plastic marker is placed at the intersection of the row and column indicated by the die rolls.

Meta-plastic markers may not be placed on or adjacent to already placed Meta-plastic markers, nor may they be placed on Protoplants or Protein Rafts; re-roll in such cases.

Once all the markers have been placed, the First Player may nominate which side of the map he will enter his forces from. The Second Player must enter his forces from the side directly opposite this.

Game-length The game continues until one of the following conditions applies:

1: One player has no undisrupted, unsubmerged units on the map.

2: There are no Meta-plastic markers left on the map.

3. It is the end of Game Turn 30.

Victory Conditions Players get points for transporting Meta-plastic markers off the map, and lose points for losing units. Each Meta-plastic marker exited by a player is worth 20 points. for each unit destroyed the owning player loses the number of points equal to its purchase cost (note that submerged units are treated as destroyed if the game ends while they are still submerged). If both players end with a negative score, the game is a draw (the cost of *victory* has been too great), though the higher score could be said to indicate a pyrrhic victory.

In all other cases, the higher score wins. If the winner's score is twice the loser's or more, a Strategic Victory is achieved (otherwise it is a Marginal Victory).

Special Rules

1: Players may modify their die rolls to determine who is First Player as follows: Every 15 points not spent on units may used to add 1 to the player's die roll. There is no limit to the number of points that may be so allocated other than the limit of 220 points per side (it is a legitimate, though unusual, tactic to spend 210 points on the die roll – an addition of +14 – and have only one unit in your force).

2: Units may freely exit the map at the map edge they entered. If they are transporting Meta-plastics at the time, they may re-enter at the hex they exited in their next Movement Phase, leaving the Meta-plastics markers may not be brought back into play. Non-transporting units which leave the map are eliminated from play (but not destroyed).

3: It is recommended that players experienced in this scenario reduce the maximum number of Game Turns to 25 (or even 20). While not every Meta-plastic marker may be captured, game tension and pace will be greatly increased. this scenario is, after all, meant to be a race for treasure, not a full scale battle.

2. AMBUSH

Backgrounds Many attempts were made by the forces involved in the Jovian War to cut the opposition off from their main camps. Most units could only survive in the field for a matter of hours, life support supplies being cut to a minimum to increase the amount of weaponry and defense systems that could be carried. If a force could be prevented from reaching base in time, it usually surrendered and swapped sides. This tactic required that the enemy force was induced to leave base

and fight a holding force which would retreat after a suitable period. Meanwhile the main force would outflank the opposition and position itself between them and their base. The smaller numbers would (hopefully) be offset by the restricted manoeuverability of the enemy. Sometimes it worked, sometimes it was a disaster. This scenario simulates such a manoeuver by the Pan-African forces of Commander Tokomo against the General Biodynamics forces of Colonel Tagashika, which occurred in July of 2186.

Forces Tokomo: 250 points; Tagashika: 170 points.

Restrictions on Unit Selection Tagashika's forces had to move rapidly to get into position before being detected; the Tagashika player may not include any artillery or tracked units in his forces. At this stage of the war, both sides still uncertain of the best equipment to use in the Kelly Pocket were experimenting with different mixes of unit. Tokomo's forces may not include more than 20% infantry, and must include at least 50% of the points spent in GEV units.

Set-Up The Tagashika player must first nominate which map edge the Tokomo forces will enter from. They will exit from the map edge opposite. The Tagashika player places the first Raft, and makes the first attempt to move a Raft. Tagashika forces start on the map. They may be placed anywhere except within 5 hexes of a map edge. The Tokomo player has the first turn, and must enter his units from the map edge nominated by the Tagashika player.

Game Length The game continues until there are no more active Tokomo units left on the map, or until Game Turn 25, which ever comes first.

Victory Conditions For each combat unit the Tokomo player exits from the map before Game Turn 15, he receives 20 points. No points are given for units exited after Game Turn 15 (they have insufficient supply to get home alive). For each unit the Tokomo player has left on the map at the end of the game, the Tagashika player receives a number of points equal to TWICE its purchase cost. Enemy units destroyed are worth a number of points equal to HALF their purchase cost.

Special Rules

1: The Tagashika units may never freely move within 4 hexes of the Tokomo exit edge (as this brings them within range of the Tokomo HQ non-mobile artillery). Any Tagashika units which move within 4 hexes of this map edge (i.e. on Wandering Rafts) are automatically destroyed, and count towards the Tokomo score. The Protein Raft they occupied is also destroyed by this (such is the power of HQ artillery) and removed from play.

2: A simple variant to this game is that players do not receive victory points for destroyed units.

3: SUPPLY DROP

Background Supply of the forces based within the Kelly Pocket itself was quite difficult. The close proximity of the two forces made the landing of the craft almost impossible, they would merely be shot down. the only reasonable method was to drop unmanned craft at extremely high velocities, thereby avoiding enemy fire; even using this

method only one in ten got through. High velocities, moreover, reduced manoeuverability, and supply craft often missed their targets, landing between the forces. Occasionally they would miss the safe zone of the Kelly Pocket itself, and plummet into the depths of Jupiter. After some two years of this, both sides began to experience severe supply shortages, and battles over supply drops which had landed in the contested zone became about the only thing which would induce the forces to fight. This scenario simulates a theoretical engagement in which a supply vessel has downed between the two forces.

Forces 300 points for each side.

Set-up sequence After both players have secretly selected their forces they should roll to see who shall go first (highest die roll wins). The First Player places the first Protein Raft, and makes the first attempt to move a Raft.

All nine Supply Drop markers are used in this scenario. The First Player rolls one die. The roll corresponds with the numbers 1-6 on the right portion of the map, and indicates a row in the centre of the map. The Second Player rolls two dice. The total of these dice corresponds with the numbers 2-12 on the upper portion of the map, and indicates a column in the centre of the map. All Supply Drop markers are placed at the intersection of the row and column indicated by the die rolls.

Once the markers have been placed, the First Player may nominate which side of the map he will enter his forces from. The Second Player must enter his forces from the side directly opposite this.

Game-length The game continues until one of the following conditions applies:

1: One player has no undisrupted, unsubmerged units on the map.

2: There are no Supply Drop markers left on the map.

3: It is the end of Game Turn 40

Victory Conditions Players get points for transporting Supply Drop markers off the map, lose points for losing units, and for control of the map.

Each Supply Drop marker exited by a player is worth 100 points. For each unit destroyed the owning player loses a number of points equal to its purchase cost (note that submerged units are treated as destroyed if the game ends while they are still submerged). If, at the end of the game, there are still Supply Drop markers left on the map, players receive points for them as follows:

1: Each Supply Drop marker which occupies the same hex as a friendly unit is worth 50 points.

2: If there are Supply Drop markers on the map which are not in the same hex as combat units, the player with the most purchase points in units still on the map is said to control the map, and receives 25 points for each remaining Supply Drop marker.

The higher score wins. If the winner's score is twice the loser's or more, a Strategic Victory is achieved (otherwise it is a Marginal Victory).

Special Rules

1: Players may modify their die rolls to determine who is First Player as follows:

Every 15 Points not spent on units may be used to add 1 to the player's die roll. There is no limit to the number of points that may be so allocated other than the limit of 300 points per side.

2: Units may freely exit the map at the map edge they entered. In this way Supply Drop markers may exit the map, giving the player victory points. Once exited, Supply Drop markers may no be brought back into play. Units which leave the map are eliminated from play (but not destroyed), and may not re-enter, whether they were transporting Supply Drop markers or not.

3: A more static, traditional, game can be created with this scenario by changing the victory point schedule such that players receive no points for exiting Supply Drop markers, and thus must control the map to win.

CHARTS AND TABLES

4.2   Sequence of Play

1: Combat Phase
2: Movement Phase
3: Rally Phase
4: Wandering Raft Movement Phase

8.3   Rallying Table

Unit Type	Rallies on roll of:
Infantry	1 – 3
Armour	1 – 2
Artillery	1

5.22   Sighting Table

Attacker's terrain	Defender's terrain	Blocked by:
Protein Floor	Protein Floor	Any intervening Protoplant or Protein Raft hex.
Protein Raft	Protein Floor	Any intervening Protoplant or Protein Raft hex adjacent to attacker
Protoplant	Protein Floor	Any intervening Protoplant or Protein Raft hex adjacent to attacker.
Protein Floor	Protein Raft	Any intervening Protoplant or Protein Raft hex adjacent to defender.
Protein Floor	Protoplant	Any intervening Protoplant or Protein Raft hex adjacent to defender.
Protein Raft	Protein Raft	Never blocked
Protein Raft	Protoplant	Never blocked
Protoplant	Protoplant	Never blocked
Protoplant	Protein Raft	Never blocked

6.26   Combat Modifications

Attacker's weapon	Defender's type	Result
Beamer	Infantry	Attack Strength halved
Sonic	Infantry	Attack Strength doubled
Sonic	Armour	Attack Strength halved
General	Occupies Protoplant hex	Attack Strength halved
Any	Disrupted	Attack Strength doubled

9.23   Movement Costs

Unit Type	Terrain	Cost to Enter
Tracked Vehicle	Protein Floor	2
GEV	Protoplant	3

7.0   Combat Results Table

Die roll	Ratio (attacker:defender)						
	1:1	2:1	3:1	4:1	5:1	6:1	7:1
1	d	d	d	x	x	x	x
2	d	d	d	d	x	x	x
3	d	d	d	d	d	x	x
4	–	d	d	d	d	d	x
5	–	–	d	d	d	d	d
6	–	–	–	d	d	d	d

CHAMELEON GAMES

By Chameleon Games

Chameleon Games started operations in 1982, the first company in Australia to import and distribute international PBM to Australia and New Zealand players. From small beginnings with games from the USA and UK we built a sound player base and have become the major supplier in Australia. Any new games we introduce here are established and running quickly allowing promotion of different games at a faster rate to our customers. Importing well known, established and thoroughly play tested games we ensure our products are of high quality and the best on offer in the world.

We have ten different games in our range at present, with more to release in the future. The support of several local design teams in Australia encourages the hobby here further. Chameleon will market these games both locally and internationallly. From the top half of the world we consider alll games that we are approached with as well as maintaining a continual search for the PBM game that will take the world by storm! No doubt it will be an Australian game (we already have the America's Cup as Jon Clemens has been lamenting over since they lost it!).

In addition to our wide range of games, our players are provided with a great in-house quarterly magazine and a regular "rumours" sheet to add further interest for our customers. These supplements provide information, articles and rumours on all the games we run and are an integral part of our operation. Further to our own publications we are the sole Australian distributors of Flagship Mazazine and provide the opportunity for our players to purchase this excellent magazine through us. As a member of the Flying Buffalo we have been recognised as a significant and competent organisation within the industry.

Being the major supplier of international games we have an electronic linkup through MINERVA to DIALCOM in the USA and BTGOLD in the UK. This allows fast turnaround for games sent electronically and improved communication with our games designers. Through MINERVA and MIDAS we can also Communicate with COMPUSERVE and the SOURCE for users of these services.

Chameleon will concentrate on locally run games from mid 1985, processing turns in-house on our own computer system, and generally enhancing our service to players including mail order games.

Our newest games include:

Crasimoffs World

The launch of Crasimoffs World in Australia has been eagerly awaited by readers of overseas gaming magazines. It is the most popular and longest running English fantasy role playing PBM and is currently taking the USA by storm. Chameleon Games is putting the final touches on the Australian version ready for launching mid-year.

Capitol

Capitol is described by its designers as a game of "Xenophobia, Conquest and Space Warfare". Positions in this game will be open in the next few weeks and it will be moderated on the computers of Adventures By Mail in the USA. ABM are known for their quality and exciting game designs and this is no exception. Capitol was subjected to the largest playtest of any commercial PMB game and has proved very popular.

Starweb

Starweb is synonomous with PBM. The PBM hobby was created around Starweb in 1970 and it has always been the classic PBM game. Starweb will be running on Chameleons own computer system providing interstellar war and diplomatic intrigue. Planet destroying berserkers, space pirates, merchant empires and dreaded black holes add to this game of star spanning empires.

Universe II and Terra II

These remain our most popular and original ongoing games from Clemens and Associates. They are open-ended similations with hundreds of players involved in the Australian versions. Universe II requires navigation of your starship through unknown space, trading, exploring and fighting. In Terra II you must lead your tribe to safety from the oncoming ice age and other natural disasters.

Feudal Lords

Strategy and diplomacy after the death of King Arthur feature in this very popular game from Graaf Simulations. Players struggle to fill the position of King in this well designed game with knights, castles, spies and economics all coming into play.

Other games distributed at present by Chameleon are Vorcon Wars from Vorcon games in the UK and from Zorph Enterprises in the US we provide Quest of the Great Jewels and Zorphwar.

Chameleon Games provides a catalogue detailing all of our games and interested people may request this from us. In fact we are pleased to hear from anyone interested in the hobby with possible game designs or any gaming information in general.
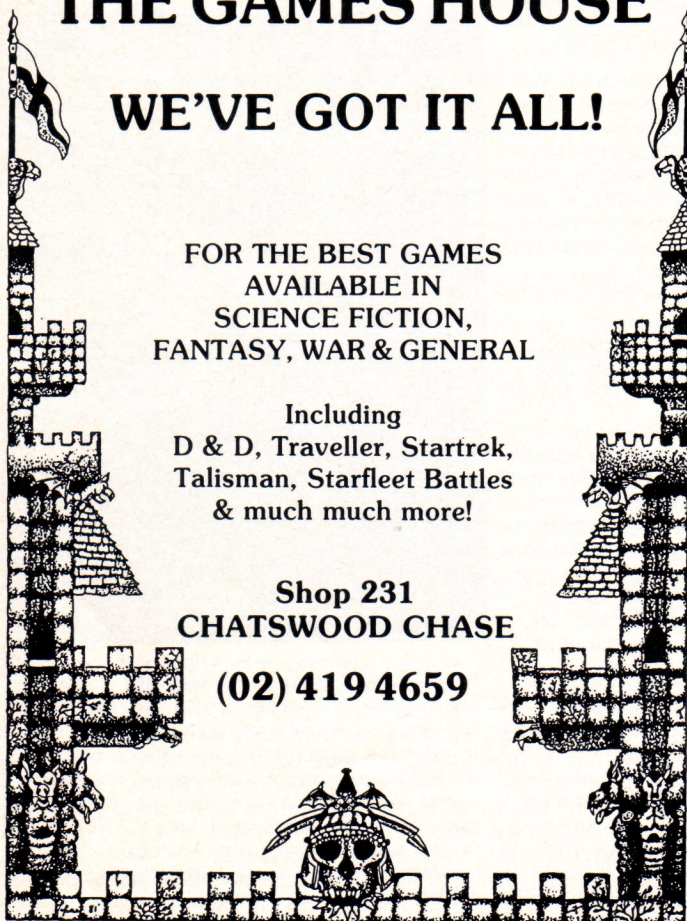
Games Reviews

STAR TREK
the Role Playing Game
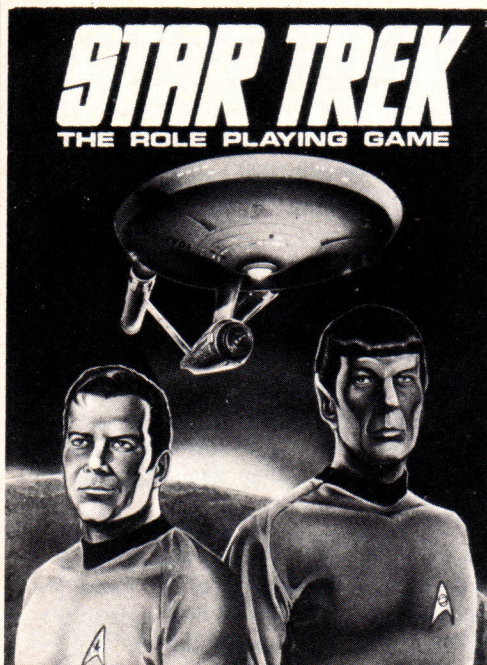
This role playing game is set in the world of the popular Star Trek fans and SF addicts alike. Here is the perfect chance to embark on adventures to other worlds, voyages to distant stars and encounters with civilisations older than man. If you've ever seen yourself as a budding Captain Kirk or a nouveau Commander Spock, then this is the perfect game for you. Like the deluxe version of this game, this, the basic set, comes as a boxed presentation. However, whereas the deluxe contains ONE book which has the required information, this edition has three books with the information shared between them.

The first book, the "Star Fleet Officer's Manual", is the players guide to the game, combining an introduction to role-playing in general, directions for character generation, a guide to character training, combat rules and data pertaining to such. The second book, entitled "Cadets' Orientation Sourcebook". This details certain aspects of the Star-Trek Universe and its history, races technology, and so on. The "Game Operation Manual" is essentially the gamemaster's guide for easier cross-referencing. These books are well set out and ordered – no flipping to different parts of the book to discover information that should be just after the section you read, – and it's written in a concise, easily understandable form.

Character generation is, for the most part, uncomplicated, utilising D10s and D100s (two 20-sided dice are thoughtfully provided for this purpose in the set). Players can select their character's race from a variety of lifeforms that include Andorians, Caitians (feline beings) Edoans (trimetrics), Tellerites, Vulcans and, of course, Humans. Traditional nasties, the Romulans and the Klingons, are not player character races in the basic game; however, FASA, the makers of Star Trek, have released supplements that allow them to be played. The

dissimilarities between the races provide the player with a new sense of character depth. Once generated, the characters can then pursue their Starfleet careers. During this time, they gain the skills that will be required of them as officers of the United Federation of Planets. By the time the character is ready for assignment (i.e. join the game), he/she is an individual in his/her own right. One word of warning, however; that while the characters will be developed in depth, the required role-up time is increased – it takes thirty minutes at least to get your character "fleshed out" as it were.

If you're interested in running Star Trek, it is an easy game to moderate. There is a system of tables for nearly everything needed such as NPC generation, creation of entire solar systems of planets and their biospheres, fauna and civilisations, and the necessary combat and standard procedure skills. This game has, in general, a table for every occasion, all set out in an orderly fashion yet guaranteeing a severe case of dice-roller's elbow! Star Trek does not recommend too many scenarios be based aboard ship, though, stressing the exploration of strange, new worlds"... I think you get the idea! To this end a large number of scenarios have been published by FASA with lots more on the way, each retailing at around $10.00. But, in the event that you wish to design your own adventures, there is a guide on how to do this in the "Game Operation Manual".

DON'T look forward to too much ship to ship combat-the game is not equipped for it, so if you're thinking of massive Star Fleet Battle-esque wars, you'd better think again. But, if you insist, FASA advises that this gap can be filled via the purchase of its game "Star Trek II: the Wrath of Khan" (costing around $20.00).

Actual character combat has been well handled, overall; it uses a system that is easy for the player and gamemaster alike to use, yet it doesn't sacrifice any detail through this lack of complexity. The variety of weapons that appear on the weapons chart indicates a fair amount of flexability as far as choice goes – you can't use a phaser on EVERY planet you land on! The damage allocations for each weapon are reasonable, although I'd advise any player to steer clear of being hit by a phaser set on "stun", as it is difficult at best, to avoid trouble when one is unconscious; but, then again, a setting of "destroy" doesn't do a great deal for you either!

Once a character has been hit, though, the struggle back to full capacity is a slow and painful process. There are no healing potions in this game, or magic to bring back all of those lost hit points, so wounds can only heal with time, bedrest, and medication. However, despite this, it's still not a good idea to go wandering off without a first aid kit – considering the system, it is a useful thing to carry around.

In general, Star Trek is a roleplaying game with distinct possibilities, as far as imagination and playability are concerned. It has plenty of scope for those who want to play it seriously, yet leaving enough leeway for those who want to be outrageous. Whole this is only the basic edition and, so, fraught with minor discrepancies, it is inexpensive enough – it retails at around $20.00 – to be purchased along with,

perhaps, one or two of the large number of supplements to cover the holes in the system. Even on its own, Star Trek is a delight to play, a pleasure to run, and more fun than a Klingon destroyer full of tribbles!

Distribution: Jedko Games.
Reviewed by M. Kahni Burrows

PARANOIA

(WEST END GAMES)
Designed by Daniel Seth Gelber;$29-$31
-rules books and 1 adventure, 2+ players;4+ hours playing time.
Published: 1984.
Review: Brendan Pratt

"A darkly humorous game of the distant future, Catch-22 meets 1984".

PARANOIA is a role-playing game set in the future of a devastated earth; where men now live in underground complexes run by computer.

The computer which runs the complex means well but it has a few wires crossed and is completely paranoid and largely schitsophrenic; it is constantly on guard against infiltration and attack by the communists often imaginary in nature but occasionally real. The characters play the part of a highly trained group of agents working for the computer in rooting out traitors and spies. Each player is one member of a 6-person clone family who have mutant power and are members of a secret organisation all of which is quite treasonous but the otherwise loyal troubleshooters don't tell the computer.
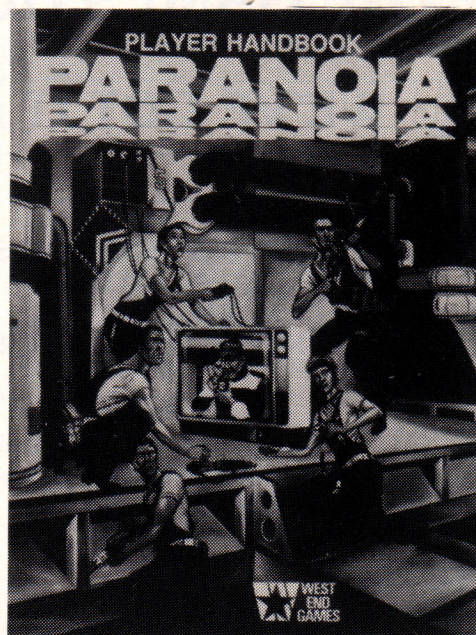
PARANOIA is boxes and includes a players handbook with background information and rules on how to generate a character and how to play; the gamemaster's handbook contains detailed information on weapons, mutations, secret societies, the computer and everything players need to know but aren't told. Lastly there is an adventure included, which incidently contains vehicle and robot rules and prices of just about anything.

Games Reviews

A strong point is this game is not serious, it is tongue in cheek, players can and should drop like flies, but without worrying as he/she has 5 other clone selves that can be activated at a moments notice. The computer is so crazy a player can have the most ridiculous (not silly) things happen to him as routine, this is not to say that it cannot be played seriously, just that it was not designed to be such.

The only major flaw in the game is its briefness in many explanations, and most referees will find this bothersome. Another point is the frequency of typos and contradictions (I still don't know whether heat ammo for a cone rifle is more powerful than that of a semi-automatic and if so in what way?).

Overall it is a thoroughly enjoyable game in which a player can completely immerse himself in role-playing and be allowed to shoot that creep of an associate who always has the others on his side just by convincing a computer that he is a traitor.....!

ED – We are hoping to have a feature review of PARANOIA next issue.

HAMMER'S SLAMMERS

(MAYFAIR GAMES INC.)
Designed by H.N. Voss; $30-$35
16-page rule book, 328 die-cut playing pieces,
1-4 players; 1-3 hours playing time.
Published: 1982.
Review: Brendan Pratt

HAMMER'S SLAMMERS is a boardgame of futuristic tactical armoured warfare set in the 29th century. Based on the novel of the same name by David Drake, Hammer's Slammers comes packaged in an attractively decorated box. The rules book is 16 pages although it only contains 7 pages of actual rules; the first 9 pages are a condensed history/version of the weapons development since the 1600's.

Hammer's Slammers is definitely an excellent novice game, with enough detailed rules to keep most experienced players happy. To read, the rules are clear and concise enough to allow smooth and relatively uninterrupted play after even a brief perusal of the main areas (movement, cover and combat). Further reading gives towing of immobile units, counter-artillery (point defence) and chemical weapons.

The pieces are well printed and heavy-duty as are the cardboard, geomorphic playing surfaces. As well as the board, rules and pieces there are a set of detached combat and movement charts, also 1 scenario booklet containing 14 set-ups with 1 solitaire and 4 multi-player; also included are rules and provisions for point system games where players select their own forces.

An unfortunate point about the game is that the combining of low technology units into most scenarios with high-technology unit makes each turn a slaughter for one person as his hi-tech, hi-defence and extremely high firepower units blow the opposition off the map with such ferocity that they leave 1/2 km wide holes in the battlefield while their erstwhile opponents barely scratch their targets armour.

All things considered, Hammer's Slammers provides some very interesting reading for the expert and some useful experience with advanced games for the novice.

HELP!!
Will the real Brendon Pratt please contact us - we seem to have misplaced his address in the piling system!!

FEUDAL LORDS

A guide to success...

Cameron Thomas

FEUDAL LORDS is a computer-processed, play-by-mail game simulating the struggle for kingship in a mythical period of English history. The game begins in year 801 AD following the death of King Arthur. There being no legitimate successor to Arthur's throne, England was divided into numerous small fiefdoms, each ruled by an independant lord seeking to become the new King of Britain. There are up to 15 players in each game, each player representing the lord of one fiefdom. Each player controls one of the 46 fiefdoms in the game, and all other fiefdoms are always controlled by non-player lords whose activities are managed by the computer. Each turn represents one year of game time. During each turn, players submit up to 12 administrative, economic, military and diplomatic activities of the fiefdom. Through the use of these orders, a player may increase his economic or political strength to achieve victory. Players must submit their actions each turn on or before the Due Date specified on the printout. Due Dates are scheduled 2-3 weeks apart to allow sufficient time for mailing turns, and results, for communicating with other players, and to decide your actions for the next turn. After the Due Date, all players orders received are processed simultaneously by the computer and the results are mailed back to the players in a 2-page computer printout. This continues until one player has met one of the conditions for victory. As soon as someone achieves victory, the game ends and a final computer printout will be sent informing everyone in the game of the results. Games usually end in 15-25 turns.

Designed by John Van De Graaf
Graaf Simulations U.S.A.

To encompass the feudal structure of the medieval period, providing a game that is both tactical and enjoyable, is no mean feat. Feudal Lords succeeds admirably. The game design has combined the economics involved with running a fief, with that of military campaigning for victory. The twelve order limit, instead of confining the scope of the game, introduces the need to develop priorities for each turn. Feudal Lords is dependant on a cash economy, and thus any successful strategy must include economic development.

ECONOMIC ASPECT

Your fiefs population is divided into three distinct groups. The army, who must be paid and fed, being essential for military expansion and thus victory. Your townsmen, who can be taxed, and thus provide a source of wealth. Finally your peasants, who produce the food, and must be fed, and can be trained as knights. From this small outline you might immediately say that the townsmen are your greatest asset. Far from it. Townsmen can be taxed from 0 to 50% of their income, which varies between 25-36 gold each turn. You start the game with a tax rate of 20%, which in all aspects is the optimum

level. At 20%, you expect to tax each townsman about 6 gold a turn, as well as still have a low enough tax rate to attract further townsmen. If you decrease the tax rate to say 0%, your town population will become very large indeed, but obviously with little profit. Alternatively if you changed to a rate of 50%, you will be lucky to have people in your town at all! In the early turns of the game, taxation is an important factor. With growth, they will provide initially about 2000 gold each turn, and will supplement your economy to a large extent. Later in the game you will find that what is taxed is insignificant to what profit can be made by manipulations of the Open market.

Each peasant unit, on an average harvest, produces 1.5 food. Thus they will feed themselves, plus produce a surplus. This surplus, after accounting for the army, can be sold to the Open market, at a price that varies according to the average harvest that year. Thus if the year was bad, food is scarce, and the price will be high. If it was a good year for harvests, then the price will be low. An average harvest of 1.5 would give a food price to sell of 10. With good and bad overall harvests for the country, the price of food can vary from as low as 6 gold each, up to 45 gold each. Thus being able to sell surplus food in bad years can reap a veritable fortune on the Open market. Beyond this it is even possible to increase food production by Agricultural Research. This action like most in the game requires gold, but obviously something that can increase your production, and therefore economy is worth doing. Each Agricultural Research success increases your harvest by .1 food per peasant unit, up to a cumulative maximum of 9 levels. Thus at maximum level, your peasants produce .9 of a food unit more than they normally would have. Even in bad years when your harvest might be as low as 1.0 food per peasant (subsistance level), with maximum research, you will be having excellent harvests of over 2.0/peasant. Thus in these bad years you will have much food to sell at massive prices and literally make a killing. With profits like these, it is quite possible to afford almost anything you wish to do for the rest of the game. Agricultural Research up to maximum level is a costly affair, but definitely worth it in the long run. Each turn you may try as many times as you like to increase it, by spending from 100 gold (10-20% chance) up to a 1000 gold maximum (90% chance). Even spending the maximum allowed does not mean a certain increase. If the attempt is successful, then you are required to pay an additional gold per peasant unit immediately. This is important to remember, as

you must have the money available, or the research will not be completed. Thus with what little money you have from food sales and taxation in the early turns, use as much as you can to get your Agricultural level up. Several small attempts (say 200-300) might be better than expending one large sum (1000) and hoping for success. By several small attempts, you are not expending much money trying, but if they succeed you will have the money left to pay for it. With a large attempt, you are putting all your money into one attempt, that might not succeed, and thus can be a terrible waste.

Your peasantry total is also important. The more peasants you have, the more surplus food you produce. Once you have established a sizeable treasury, you can pay the money game for what it is worth. In good years, purchase livestock (which grow at about 30% each turn), as well purchasing extra food to use to feed your peasants. Normally whatever the peasants require is automatically deducted from your food total. If you use one of the game options available, it is possible to feed the peasants more food than they require, to boost their breeding rate. Normally peasants increase at 5% each turn but by overfeeding them it is quite possible to increase this to up to 20%. This can be a large growth when you have 1000+ peasants. The livestock investment is also effective. It costs 5 gold and 1 food (which could have been sold) per livestock bought, which seems expensive. Food unsold at the end of a turn deteriorates at a rate of 25%, while the livestock herds grow at 30%. Thus livestock are an effective way to store food for sale at a later date, when prices are favourable. Other investments such as mines, fishing villages, lumber mills should take a back seat to the building up of your food economy. Later you will find, that with spare actions these can be implemented at will. Many of them require peasants to start them (eg Lumber mill requires 10 peasants), and by calculation you will find that these peasants would have produced more as farmers than they ever could in the lumber business. Try not to deplete your peasantry total. You will need them for later when you plan to increase your army.

Initially, many players find the army of 200 Knights (each fief starts with) as a burden on the fief. Different options are available. If you keep the knights, then you might as well use them. Raids on neighbouring fiefs can normally pay for the cost of your army each turn, but you will still be required to feed them valuable food. If you do disband some or nearly all of your knights at the start, you will have lost a
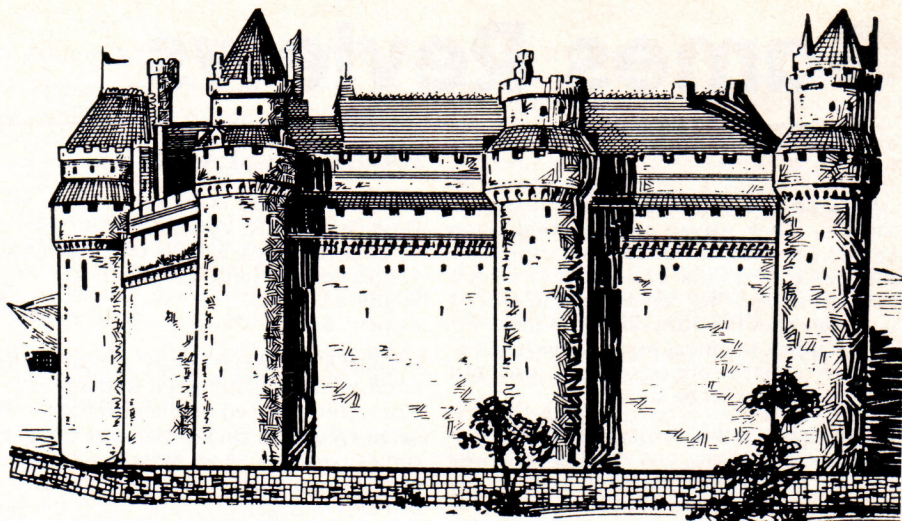
significant number that will have to be replaced by the peasantry at a later date, of you intend to fight and win. The advantages of disbanding them is the fact that you then will not have to pay or feed them, giving you much more money to get your economic development started. It is important to remember that Knights are fed and paid before you get the option to disband them. Thus you are forced to pay and feed them for the first turn at least. You must always have a least 1 knight, so complete disbanding is not possible. If you do take this option, then you have no intentions on military campaigns for the early turns. This brings the fiefs Champion to the limelight. Every turn in the game, that you do not campaign, you will instead receive a report from your Champion. The Champion; nemisis to some when he is killed or captured, loved by all when he does a great deed, and brings profit to the fief. But he is more than that. Apart from being very beneficial when his exploits are successful (giving an increase in his level), he is the heir to fiefdom. If by random event, your lord dies, it is the champion at his current level that takes control. Random events are common, and as well as being advantageous, they can be painful. Most aspects of the game are subject to random events. You might find a treasure of gold, or watch your agricultural level deteriorate. Usually they can be taken in your stride, and later in the game they have little effect. It is early in the game that they can sometimes make or break you.

Thus for the early turns, developing your food production, and thus income to a maximum is essential. All actions then are in easy reach. Castle development, the most expensive outlay, can be done with relative ease. This gives fiefs, with even small armies a greater security, and protects all the hard work you have done to develop your fief. In the later turns, the economy takes a backseat to military campaigning, as you start your fight to gain dominance of the continent.

MILITARY ASPECT

Within the structure of the game, is an effective representation of Feudalism during the Middle Ages, that enables a player to succeed both by conquest and diplomacy. Being forced by military defeat to swear fealty to an overlord, or doing so by choice, gave security and strength, since together the alliance of overlord and vassal was militarily stronger than either lord alone. This is the basis for victory. A player's power and position within the game is measured in terms of the number of his vassals, and their direct vassals (his subvassals), and this is expressed by a Feudal rank. All players start the game as a Baron, and with success hope to rise to the rank of King, controlling a majority of the fiefs within the game. Victory is achieved by this means, or by being overlord to all remaining player-fiefs, or the only remaining player.

The general method for gaining vassals is by conquest using military campaigns. Player fiefs may voluntarily swear fealty to any other fiefdom (as well as change their overlord). Non-player fiefs will not swear fealty or change their overlord, unless conquered by siege. Vassals are obligated to pay a scutage each turn scaled to their current rank, unless they support a campaign conducted by their overlord. Military campaigns are carried out in detailed steps. First you are required to move your army to the area in which you intend to conduct it, unless defending your own fief. Movement may occur from one fief to any adjacent fief. Sea

movement may also be conducted from a coastal fief to ANY other coastal fief, if you possess the ship capacity to move your campaigning force. Sea movement may be combined with land movement. You may also move through as many adjacent fiefs as you wish, providing the fief permits it. You have permission to move through a fief, if that fief is your vassal, subvassal, overlord, or a vassal of your overlord. Alternatively, the use of one Favour will permit movement through. Favours are a representation of diplomatic influence within the game. Non-player fiefs must be bribed to give Favours, while player fiefs may freely grant or withdraw them. Favours can be used for both passage through fiefs, or for non-player fiefs to support your military campaigns. If the fief is your vassal, one favour is required for support, or two from a non-vassal.

Each turn you may elect to lead ONE of 6 types of military campaigns. Alternatively you may order to support another fiefs campaign. If in turn you do not campaign, your army will remain in your castle and defend it from sieges only. The campaign types are as follows:

DEFEND FIEF (Type 100): Used to defend either your own fief, or any fief you move to. When defending your own fief, it is an effective form of opposition to any other fiefs raid campaign. An army defending its own fief, if defeated, retreats into its castle, and thus will count against any sieges as well. The obvious use for this campaign is then, to protect your own fief and vassals from other players, when you know or suspect they will be attacking or raiding.

RAID (Type 200): This campaign loots gold from the target fief, and can be an important source of wealth in the early stages of the game. It can often be used to soften up neighbouring non-player fiefs by ruining their balanced economy. It is important to remember that a raid will fight any army (attacking or defending), that is in the fief, and must win to successfully loot. Non-player fiefs are the common target for raids, as it is uncommon for the fiefs to be on campaign defending, and thus raids are normally unopposed.

FIELD BATTLES (Type 300) A campaign that will result in your army fighting in a fief until defeated. The order is not commonly used, but if successful does give an increase in leadership rating. This is not unique, as a successful siege also increases a players leadership rating, and as an order has more benefit. It is quite possible for allied players with no immediate campaign plans, to set up a mock battle, for an increase in leadership to the winner. Eg. One player campaigning by sea with 1 knight against his waiting ally.

SIEGES (divided into three types)

a) Type 400: A normal siege used to conquer a fief and force it to swear fealty to someone. Before the siege, you must successfully defeat any other campaigning armies in the fief. If the siege is successful, you can specify who the fief swears fealty to, thus a conquered fief can become vassal to you or any other fief you nominate. Non-player fiefs will not sweat fealty unless conquered by siege, and once a vassal, will remain so, until conquered by another fief. Conquering player fiefs with Type 400 sieges is not as effective. Apart from reducing their number of knights a conquered player could renounce his new overlord immediately next turn, suffering only a small monetary penalty. Thus its major use is to gain non-player vassals, who can in the future be used to support further campaigning.

b) Type 500: This campaign is effective against player owned fiefdoms. Conducted exactly like a Type 400 siege except that any player of the conquered fief is removed, if the siege is successful, and replaced by a non-player. A player ousted from his fief can move to an available fief if one exists, or is eliminated from the game. This is a drastic order, as the player you are attacking, if not eliminated, will be obviously hostile in the future. Players forced into new fiefs normally have to start from scratch their economic development. So removing a wealthy player from his highly developed fief can substantially reduce the power of the player attacked. All players are safe from this attack (as well as the next type, 600) for the first three turns since the order cannot be used before year 804.

c) Type 600: The final type of siege, and similar to the others except that if the siege is successful you will abandon your own fief and take control of the conquered one. Your old fief will become a vassal unless conquered by another fief. Often from spying, it can be seen that other player-fiefs are more developed than your own, and thus make tempting targets for takeover. If you follow the economic guidelines within this article, it will be your fief that is being eyed with greed. It is quite possible to, for one turn, totally over-militarize your fief, turning the majority of peasants into knights for a large attack. If you attempt this you had better succeed, for failure will return you to your economically ruined fief. Huge armies of up to 2000 knights can be massed in this form, but even then success is not definite. Take the case of attacking another player fief this way, who in the same turn campaigns against your fief. By the rules the computer randomly picks who's attack will continue, and thus there is a 50% chance that your massive attack will be aborted. Overall, a Type 600 siege is a desperate measure, and great care and planning should be used before attempting it.

Combat resolution is determined by a strength ratio. Strengths are adjusted by leadership (each level higher than your opponent gives a 10% increase) and in the case of sieges, Castle levels (each level adding 50% to the defenders strength). To resolve the battle or siege, the computer randomly determines a strength ratio necessary to win ranging from .2:1 to 5:1 (weighted towards 1:1). If the attackers ratio to defending strength exceeds the random battle won ratio the attacker wins the battle. Thus at odds of 5:1 or greater victory is certain, while at 1:1, there is about a 50% chance of winning. Campaigning to win is not as abstract as it seems. Preparation and planning (eg. spying) can assure that you have the advantage necessary to win.

Some interesting results and tactics can occur combining the systems of fealty and sieging. At the start of the game, no player fief is adjacent to another player, but often the gap is only one non-player fief. Normally with no favours owed by the intervening fief, both players can feel safe from attack. By spying on the fief, this can be continually checked. However, all it takes is for one player to swear fealty to the intervening non-player fief, and free passage for attack against the other player is open. Even with large distances involved, the majority of fiefs are not safe from attack. Two thirds of the fiefdoms in the game are coastal, and many of these start as player fiefs. By use of ships, a sea attack brings within easy access all coastal fiefs, and by combining the above example of swearing fealty to a fief, all but three of the forty six fiefs in the game can be attacked without the use of favours. To give an example (see both map and

example military report). As Manchester I had noticed the player controlling Devon (at the other end of England) continually raided each turn against one of his neighbouring fiefs. By 804 (the first year type 500 and 600 sieges can be conducted) I had built 4 ships, and thus Devon posed a tempting target. By attacking him, I was assuming he would again campaign with his army, leaving little behind to defend his home fief. With a small force I attacked by sea, and removed him from his fief with a type 500 siege. Since, at that stage of the game he had no vassals (or an overlord with vassals) he was eliminated from the game. I had gained a developed vassal with minimum losses.

Thus safety from attack in the game is almost non-existant. If someone wants to get to you, they can normally find a way to do so. But again by using the rules of fealty, this can be overcome, and your continual existence in the game assured. All players are safe from being removed from their fief, and elimination for the first three turns. If by 804 you have not acquired a vassal, and feel threatened (paranoid), you can secure your position in the game by making a suitable fief your overlord. By this time players may have contacted you, requesting that you become their vassal, so the choice may be easy. Still choose carefully. By swearing fealty to a fief with one, or more (preferable) non-player vassals, it is possible to move one of these vassals if removed from your own fief. The overlord can protect one of his vassals, by designating it as an alternate fief (requiring an order). Most players with only one vassal have no need for this order, as this is the fief they would be forced to move to if removed from their own. A player with two non-player vassals cannot stop you moving to one of them when forced, if they are available. The only exception to these guidelines is if the overlord himself attacks you. You then cannot retreat into one of his vassals. It is assumed that this situation would not occur, as much diplomacy with your new overlord should have already passed. Convince him that you wish to help him win. Most players would readily accept the support of another, and few would realise or deny the protective effect the overlord gives. After all, that is part of the feudal structure; safety and strength in numbers.

Tri-Fealty is an example of that statement. Three players combined, each an overlord to one of the other two, and vassal to the other. This arrangement has no amazing benefits, but does provide some practical uses. Safety, plus increased rank via the vassals and subvassals, as well as providing a strong alliance that could easily lead to a win. For one of the players to win, the triangular relationship would have to be broken, but it is more important to remember that all supporters of the King are classed as winners also, in the final results. Tri-Fealty is a novel use of the fealty system, and provides an amusing situation. A player is both overlord to his vassal, as well as a subvassal to him, and thus counts towards his rank!

Within the game, as a vassal, you cannot attack your overlord, but your overlord can attack you. This inbalance can easily be overcome, as changing or removing your allegience is a simple task that occurs at the start of the turn. For a small penalty that is scaled to your current rank, you can change or drop your overlord, and immediately attack him. Thus for a player, the best vassals are non-player, whose allegience is certain. This is not to say that a player vassal is not acceptable. You will find it is almost impossible to win without the support of other players, and again this is where

diplomacy and co-operation is so necessary. It is just important to remember, that it is extremely easy for an allied vassal to turn upon his overlord. Returning to the statement that a player cannot attack his overlord. An interesting example of how intrigueing the fealty system can be, occurred in the Australian Game 2 in year 804. Hereford had already gained two non-player vassals in Cairleon and Glamorgan, and because of his expansion towards Carmarthen, this player became worried. Carmarthen had no vassals, having spent all efforts on economics, and decided upon a drastic measure that proved very entertaining. By swearing fealty to Cairleon (a vassal of Hereford) Carmarthen had free passage to attack Hereford, and did so with a type 500 siege. The siege was successful and Hereford, failing to designate an alternative fief, was randomly placed in Cairleon.Thus at the end of the turn, Carmarthen was vassal to the player he had attacked that turn. He had in fact attacked his overlord, but within the confines of the rules. It is situations like these, that provide an amazing insight into how complex the effective yet simple rules on fealty can become.

Later in the game when you have one or more vassals of your own, campaigning for more becomes an easier task. By use of a favour, a non-player vassal will support your campaign against any fief but its own. The non-player can move to anywhere on the map, and will support your campaign with at least 50% of its army. This ability to move from their fief to support you anywhere can be used to great advantage. With several supporting fiefs, plus mercenaries, it is quite feasable to send a very small amount of knights (minimum of 1 required) from your own fief on campaign, and still field a very large force. This would allow the majority of your troops to remain to defend your home fief, which by this time is the economic strength driving your campaigns. The advantage of sending a small number, but with massive support, is that losses to your own knights will only be minimal, since minimal involvement takes place.

Mercenaries, although not practical in the early stages of the game, can easily be afforded once maximum economic development is reached. Hiring is limited to as many knights as in your own fiefs army, and you will find that they should be hired to the maximum, to make your campaign as effective as possible.

Diplomacy within the game is of paramount importance. With the initial turns, it is easy to ignore the other players in the game, as conflict of interests will not be common. Still it is important to attempt to contact some or all of those involved, at least to set up friendly relations as soon as possible. A useful form of co-operation in the early stages of the game is the exchange of spy reports. By exchanging with several players it is relatively simple to keep an eye on most of the player fiefs within the game. Other players may choose you as their ally for future plans, and military co-ordination between players can be extremely effective. If a troublesome player is bothering you or an ally, seperate attacks against his vassal(s) and home fief could soon reduce his power, or eliminate him from the game. Convincing players to swear fealty to you is a harder task. Explaining that those who support the winner are also winners at the end of the game, doesn't always bring players flocking to your support. Continual and sincere diplomacy should eventually succeed. If you intend to

enact a change of allegience, and attack an ally or overlord, make sure you succeed. You will have bound to have made an enemy successful or not, but the results of treachery can often be worth it. Remember that if you fail to get in contact with the other players, the game and victory, could easily slip past you.

By following the economic guidelines to success, and by steady and cautious military expansion, your position by the mid-game period should be strong. By co-operating with other players, victory, whether it be yours or an ally, can be reached in a very short time. Feudal Lords' simple and enjoyable design produces a fast and entertaining game. The rules are precise, and leave little room for questioning. The games popularity has attracted many players to date, and will continue to entice people who look for good value. I can stongly recommend Feudal Lords to any player new to PBM gaming, as a first game.

Thy Seneschal reports....

"Your Fief awaits ye, Lord"

FEUDAL LORDS is available from Chameleon Games, GPO Box 2302, Sydney 2001 N.S.W. Set-up (rulebook and first two turns), $5 a turn thereafter and 2-3 week turn-around – Computer Moderated.
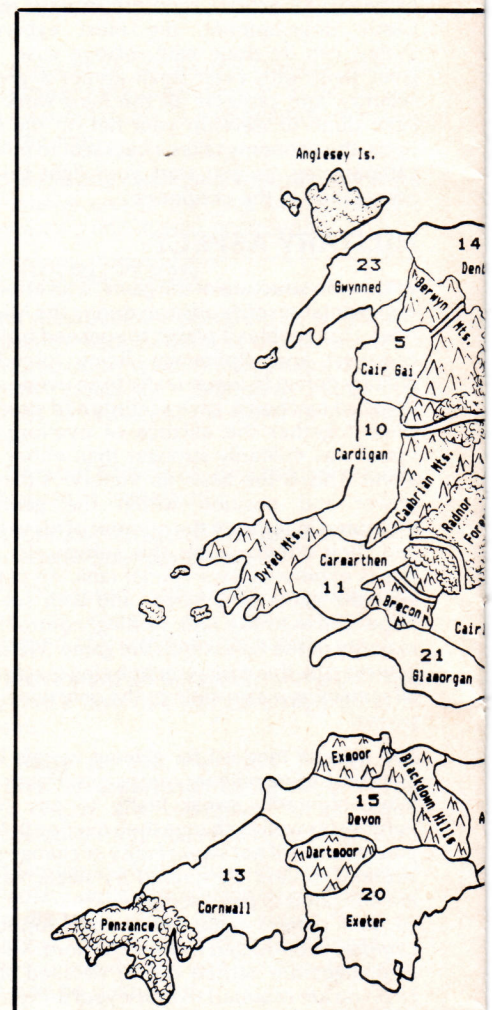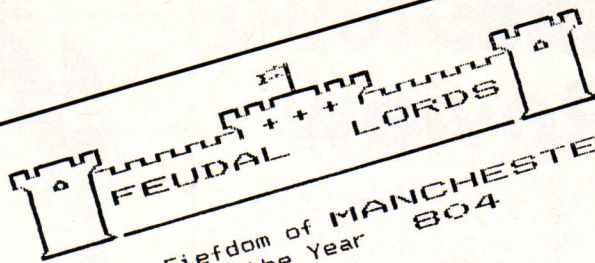
For the Fiefdom of MANCHESTER
In the Year 804

To: Lord C. Thomas, Baron of MANCHESTER

Thy Seneschal carried out thy orders as follows:

MANCHESTER began the year with:

	Gold	Food	Peasant	Townmen	Knights
					2
		2256	1047	363	+0
	2032			+0	+101
	-10	-2	-101	+0	+0
	-2020	-101	+0		
	+21726	-1207			

You maintained 2 knights
You trained 101 new knights
You sold 1207 food at market
You gave 0 F to Town @ 0 G/F.
Town bought 363 F.
You gave 946 F to peasants
Agricultural research succeeds
Agricultural research succeeds
Agricultural research succeeds
...d 1 ship

		-946			
		+0	+0		+0
	-1946	+0	+0	-10	+0
	-1946	+0	+0	-10	+0
	-1946	+0	+0	+0	
	-400	+0	+0		
	-400	+0			
	-100	+0			
	-100				

...he following revenues:

				+84	+0
		+0	+39	+0	+0
	+0	+2226	+0		
	+500				

other events in the fief:

MANCHESTER   Fief # 29

Year: 805

Game # 1
Player: C. Thomas
Market Price for Food: Sell 32 , Buy 36
Leadership 4

Lord's Rank: Baron

		Tax rate	0
		Markets	0
Gold	16423	Livestock	552
Food	2226	Ships	6
Knights	92	Agric. bonus	
Peasants	985	Champion	
Townsmen	427		
Castle	10		

Vassals: DEVON

FEUDAL LORDS
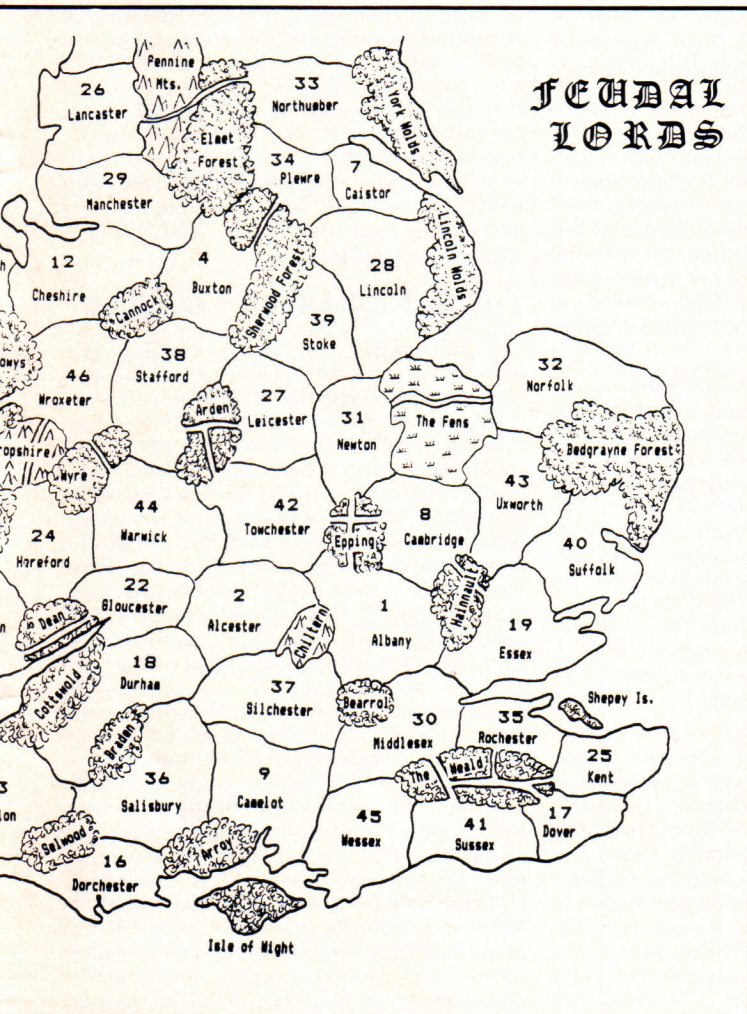
The Romulans: A Review

Brandt Dainow

THE ROMULANS
FASA CORPORATION
Recommended Retail: $19.95

The Romulans is the latest in a series of supplements by FASA for their Star Trek role-playing game, and is the first one to be released since their major overhaul of the rules which was published last year. The supplement is divided into two section, one for players and one for gamemasters, each of which is bound separately.

THE PLAYER'S GUIDE

The players guide (labelled "The Romulans: Starfleet Intelligence Manual") is presented as an orientation manual for Starfleet officers. This approach holds up well at first, creating a strong impression of a military intelligence document. However, this feeling wanes when the manual starts to deliver detailed information. Admittedly, it's pretty difficult to present material for use in a role playing game while making it look like factual information, perhaps FASA would have been better off not to have tried at all. Certainly with the wealth of "factual" Star Trek documentation around, ranging from ship blue prints to medical manuals, the procedures for this approach have become well established, and FASA's efforts in this respect are slightly below standard.

The player's guide is divided into five sections; the first being an introduction which mainly deals with the Romulan language. I found this chapter the least satisfactory in the whole supplement. The section on Romulan pronunciation was quite good, being clear, concise, and easy to understand. However, the so-called "Dictionary of Spoken Romulan Terms" was really a bit of a joke. Such a section should concentrate on terms players will find the most useful when overhearing Romulan conversations. The majority of such terms would be of a military nature, such as "attack", "retreat", "right flank", "circle around behind the enemy", "we're low on ammunition", and so on. After all, most player characters are going to encounter Romulans as enemies, overhearing their conversations when monitoring military communications. In such circumstances, knowing the Romulan terms for marriage, birth, and nest, is unlikely to be of much use. Perhaps a more careful choice of words would have been in order here.

The second chapter in the players guide covers the Romulan Empire, its history, external politics, and the extent of its influence. As in most gaming supplements a time-line of major events is included. As in most gaming supplements this is a waste of time. Knowing the date when the Romulans landed their first unmanned probe on another planet is of no value to a player at all. The only historical details that are of any interest to a player (or a gamemaster, for that matter) are ones which influence events in the present, the best that can be said of the rest of a history is that it provides colour. Much more useful would have been a series of paragraphs which provide information about the themes and forces within Romulan history which influence their actions and politics today.

The section on the home worlds of Romulus and Remus is, on the other hand, very good indeed. This section is presented as extracts from a tourist guide to the major cities of Romulus and Remus, and includes light anecdotes, snippets of classical Romulan poetry, and a large dash of religious fervor. It is very well written, and appears the most genuine of the "factual" material. The tourist guide provides players with a very strong feel for the non-political aspects of Romulan culture without providing them with too much information. Similarly well handled is the section detailing Romulan interactions with the other major powers in the game. This section, more than any other, conveys the impressions of uncertainty and mistrust resulting from lack of information about ones neighbours. Covering Romulan interactions with the Klingons, Gorns, and UFP, it provides a setting which is vibrantly active and alive, without committing a gamemaster to any course of political events within a campaign setting. In fact, the major effect of this section is to make the players receptive to almost any set of major events the gamemaster wishes to toss up.

The third chapter of the players guide covers the Romulan people themselves, starting with their personality traits. This material is presented in the guise of three reports by different members of Starfleet. This format has been used successfully in many previous Star Trek documents and is extremely effective here. Besides the providing players with information about the Romulan traits. It also serves to provide them with the spectrum of human reactions to these traits (ranging from the xenophobic to the sympathetic), and this does it very well. The sections which follow cover psionics, religion, stages of Romulan life, and Romulan government. Each of these is adequate without being exceptional either way.

The fourth chapter of the player's guide covers the Romulan armed forces. Details are provided covering Romulan tactics, command structures, and organisation of the various branches. Also included are details of five major Romulan ships. The details of the ships are especially well done, providing players with "assessments" of the ships, rather than with accurate information. The section on Romulan battle tactics I found a little short, but it covered the major points adequately, and it did avoid tying a gamemaster to anything specific while at the same time providing solid guidelines from which to work.

It was in the fifth and final chapter of the player's guide that the presentation of the material as a Starfleet intelligence document really broke down. This chapter dealt with equipment used by the Romulans. The information provided was simply much too detailed to be consistent with the previous material. One of the most important factors in the image presented of the Romulans is that they are a "faceless enemy". They have never been captured, they take no prisoners, and they never negotiate. How is it then, that players are provided with information about their personal tastes in sidearms, transportation, medical procedures, and so on. The majority of

these details should have been in the gamemaster's guide, which players are not supposed to read. In fact, many gamemasters may find it useful to prevent access by their players to this material, and prepare an edited version of it for their use.

Overall, "The Romulans: Starfleet Intelligence Manual" section of FASA's "The Romulans" supplement is a mixed bag. The general standard is pretty high for the most part, but it is not consistent throughout. This has the effect of making the weaker sections of the manual glaringly obvious. It is, however, remarkably consistent in terms of the ideas and details provided about the Romulans, and does a very good job of providing players with sufficient material to role-play, or just interact with, Romulan characters. The illustrations vary in quality considerably, but are, for the most part, very good and always relevant. It is very well written throughout, and consequently is a pleasure to read, even if you never plan on meeting a Romulan.

THE GAME MASTER'S BOOKLET

The gamemaster's booklet is entitled "The Romulan Way: Game Operations Manual" and is significantly longer than the player's guide. It is composed of six chapters which cover running Romulan characters (both player and NPC), Romulan culture and politics, the Romulan armed forces, and Romulan character generation. There is a fair amount of overlap with the player's guide in terms of subject matter, but the gamemaster's booklet covers the material in more depth. As well as providing greater detail, it is, of course, "correct". It's pretty important players of non-Romulan characters don't read this material unless they have a proven capacity for role-playing characters with less information than themselves, most of the information provided in the booklet is unknown to the UFP, and some of the material in the player's guide is actually incorrect. The introductory chapter deals with the design of adventures involving Romulan characters, referring to specific Star Trek episodes wherever possible. It is intelligently and concisely presented, providing details for adventures utilizing merchants as well as the more traditional naval personnel. The section on running adventures with Romulan player characters is not quite so helpful, as much of the material which should have been included here has been scattered in other places throughout the booklet.

The second chapter deals with the Romulan Star Empire. It begins with a discussion of the major historical trends in Romulan history and the impact of the Romulan native environment upon their culture and physiology. Most of the space at this point is devoted to discussion of the physical similarities between Romulans and Vulcans and explanations thereof.

Following the discussion of Romulan origins is a timeline of major historical events. This one is more useful than the one in the player's guide, providing as it does details of more recent events, but still I think the material could have been better presented in a different format. There follows a section on the Romulan home worlds of Romulus and Remus, including planetary maps. Most of this information will be unintelligible to players without the updated version of the Star Trek rules. The next section deals with the extents of the Romulan Empire, mainly concentrating on military installations and major planets (11 are covered). A map of the Romulan Empire is included, and while this is useful, it gives the impression of having been a very cursory effort indeed. It is poorly drawn, and most of it is blank. The major fault of this section however, is that more detail is provided about the colonised worlds than about the home worlds, which is a reversal of what you'd expect. The final section of this chapter covers Romulan interactions with the other major political forces, the Gorns, Klingons, and UFP. Much of this material is simply a repeat of what can be found in the player's guide, accompanied by corrections and elucidations. Particularly useful here are projections of the likely course of future events regarding international interactions between the Romulans and their neighbours.

The third chapter of the gamemaster's booklet is entitled "The Romulan People" and covers personality traits, religion, stages of life, government, law and punishment, and the Romulan attitude to medicine, which differs considerably from the human attitude. The section on personality traits is well thought out, providing believable motivations for alien behaviour. Some effort is made to provide material which prevents the Romulans becoming one-dimensional automatons, but this effort is counter-acted by other material in the same section which presents a very one-dimensional view, so the effect is watered down to a large degree.

The section following, which details the Romulan religion, contains an explanation of Romulan attitudes and beliefs concerning their similarities to Vulcans, but really does not address the issue properly. The Romulans are presented as having a different view of their origins from that held by the UFP, but what this view is, is not adequately covered. Since religion is supposed to be central to Romulan culture, I feel more space should have been devoted to this section, which really does not provide sufficient material for proper role-play of intensely religious characters, especially NPC's. The section on the Romulan stages of life (similar to rites of the passage) is closely connected with the preceding section on religion. This section covers the average Romulan's passage through life very well, providing as it does, details about the events at each stage, as well as Romulan societies attitudes to them. It is thorough, exceptionally clear, and very well thought out. A small criticism of it is that perhaps it is a little too long, given the short amount of space devoted to other areas which are of greater relevance

when actually playing the game.

The section on government is merely a repitition of the same section in the player's guide, with slightly more detail thrown in. Noticeably lacking here is any mention of the methods by which the government functions. Great detail is devoted to who may stand for office, and how long office is held for, but there is no mention of bureaucracy, government administration, taxation, judicial systems, police, education, and so on. I was left with the feeling that perhaps the politicians themselves do all this – they must work very hard indeed!

Following the discussion (or lack thereof) of Romulan outcasts. This aspect of Romulan society is perhaps the most fertile in terms of material for adventures involving UFP player characters with the Romulans, but is really much too short to provide gamemasters with really solid material to work from. In contrast, the next section, which is about the Romulan attitudes to medicine and aid to the sick or injured is equally short, but manages to convey all the required detail for some really interesting incidents within a game.

The fourth chapter of the gamemaster's booklet is devoted to the Romulan Imperial Navy. It begins with a discussion of its organisation, the operations of each division, and its command structure. The material on the operation of each division is more than adequate, covering interactions between the divisions, as well as the activities of each. However, the material on the command structure is presented in the form of a diagram which manages to convey, while occupying fully half a page, almost no information at all. While it lists each of the branches in a division, it provides no information on what each one does, or how the different branches relate to each other. In many cases the function of a branch is clear from the name (it is obvious, for instance, what the medical branch does), but in many cases this is not clear at all. I was left with the impression that the diagram had been inserted at this point because the designers thought that one ought to be there, but really didn't have the faintest idea of what such a diagram was supposed to do.

The chapter finishes with a section about the Romulan command structure followed by a "starship recognition file". The section on ranks is quite well thought out, and manages to convey a sense of practicality to a system that looks at first glance thoroughly unworkable. However, the starship recognition file is the

worst one FASA have ever produced. The material provided in it is of almost no use to a gamemaster at all. Details of ship speeds, screen capacities, engine powers, structural strengths, transporter and tractor beam capabilities, and all the other details required to put Romulan ships through the combat system, are absent. Two of the ships listed are not mentioned in any other Star Trek supplement at all, so there is no possibility of gleaning the material elsewhere. As one of these is the ship that appeared in the Star Trek III movie, this absence is inexcusable!

The fifth chapter deals with running adventures involving Romulans. The section contained in it about Romulan equipment is extremely short as most of the relevant material is contained in the player's guide, which is where it definitely shouldn't be. However the section on running adventures involving Romulan player characters is very well thought out and perceptive, and contains many points about role-play that would be useful to gamemasters of any game.

The final chapter covers the generation of Romulan characters. This chapter is of the same standard and format to similar sections in other supplements, and is fairly straightfoward. However, for some reason it contains no details of which branches within a particular division lead to upper level command positions. For example in the UFP's Starfleet, a character wishing to become a ship commander usually doesn't start service as a doctor. No such equivalent information is provided for the Romulans at all.

In general "The Romulans" suffers from faults of design rather than implementation. Much attention has been devoted to the details provided in each subject covered, so that the material overall is very consistent and believeable. However, little thought seems to have been given to the selection of subjects to be covered and to the amount of space to be devoted to each. Great effort has been spent to provide readers with a reasonably comprehensive overview of most aspects of Romulan society, but this is not the purpose of a role-playing supplement. The purpose of a role-playing supplement is to provide material suitable for incorporation into a game, to assist and guide a gamemaster in the creation of scenarios, and in the running of adventures and campaigns, and to provide the players with material to assist them in their role-playing. As I have mentioned some material absolutely essential for these purposes has been omitted, while fully 20% of the information in the gamemaster's guide will probably be of no use at all.

Despite this Star Trek gamemasters will find the supplement invaluable for the incorporation of Romulans into their campaigns (since some information's better than none), but will find they have to work quite hard to fill in the gaps left in this supplement with material that is consistent with FASA's inventions. The material is very well written and clearly presented, so reading it is not a chore at all. It is, in fact, because it is so well written, and so much of the material is so well thought out, that areas which are merely average stand appear as substandard. In terms of value for money, I would recommend it only if you are particularly interested in the Romulans as a fan of the Star Trek mythos, or are determined going to use Romulans in an existing Star Trek campaign.
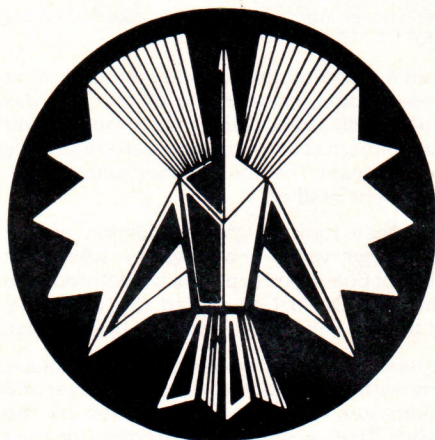
PLAY BY MAIL

...An overview of the Australian PBM scene...

Cameron Thomas

Kevin Flynn's article on *What is PBM* should give those readers who are uninitiated to the PBM scene, an insight into the workings of a Postal game. In my last article, I find now, that I missed C.R.E. Games, and a report from Chris Edwards on the group follows. Also reports from Australian Wizard, Missing Tiger and Chameleon Games. Any professionally-moderated PBM groups that wish to supply updates on their workings are welcome to write to:

KIM BOOKS,
82 Alexander St
Crows Nest
NSW 2065

Readers willing to contribute an article or views on PBM are also invited to contact me.

THE AUSTRALIAN WIZARD (AusWiz)

Spiral Arm; presently two games are running smoothly and with few drop outs. One or two people are close to being eliminated and the next turn should prove very interesting. Somebody will feel the wrath of a defended home world! Game three has five vacancies remaining and will begin early July.

Midgard; three games running, the first into its 24th move, and still not one country has fallen, although a couple are very close. Game five has filled and will start shortly, game four has only 5 places left. At the rate we are receiving applications game six will have to be prepared shortly. Midgard turn fees will rise to $4.00 as of July.

Keys of Bled; My group is prospering well in Coasthold at the city of Echever, they intend to head east after the winter has passed. AusWiz have had a sudden upsurge in Bled recently and therefore have run out of rules booklets. New ones will be available shortly. Due to the price of the pound costs for Bled turns have been forced up to $4.00 each and the Voice of Bled up to $1.50. Past copies of the VOB can be photocopy for those who wish them. For those who wish to have a slightly faster turn around, we suggest you send your moves direct to Spellbinder Games in England, 95 King St, Ramsgate, Kent, CT11 8NZ.

Earthwood; our latest game has had a bit of a slow start. One game is full and running but the second has only half filled. Unfortunately there are only a certain number of positions of a particular type available in each game and you may not always get what you want, first in first served. The game running has got off to a very quick start with players running into each other all over the place. This is not a game for the faint hearted. (See competitions).

Lords of Aquilonia (LOA); the play test for our new game is slowly getting started and play in earnest will begin in late July sometime. LOA is the closest thing we have to a role playing game and deals with life as a Knight in medieval times. The real game is not expected to be available till next year as several novel concepts will need thorough testing.

AUSSY PBM EXPORTS

On the international news side of things, Spiral Arm has been sold to agents in the US and England. The English game is being sold to Spellbinder Games now and will start as soon as we solve a few bugs in the converted program. The US game will be released by Graff Simulations after a period of playtesting, fortunately his computer is more compatible and we see little trouble with getting it working. Midgard, under the name of WarLords of Chaos, has been available in England through Spellbinder Games for a couple of months now and has already filled three games.

As for our new games here, we are looking at *Lords of the Apoch* from England and a *Railbaron* type of game from the US. These are all being developed at the present time and are not likely to be available till next year.

MINERVA

Lastly, if you have a computer and a modem, with software that will allow you to download to your printer, then we suggest you investigate the MINERVA system from OTC. AusWiz will be using this more and more as time passes and consider it ideal for text transfer. MINERVA is free to join and only costs $15.00 per user hour.

Kevin Flynn

ED – We are on MINERVA and most of the text in our magazines is sent to us by our editors over the telephone using this system. CHAMELEON GAMES are also on the system and I'm trying to put the boot into other PBM companies to join up.

THE MISSING TIGER

The Missing Tiger is a partnership of Rick Snell and John Campbell which moderates games by mail. The two of them went through Uni at the same time, went their seperate ways and met again in a fish and chip shop early in 1983. Rick is a dedicated D & D (tm) gamesmaster looking for something which was missing from face to face games and John is a chess, go and occasional D & D (tm) player. With their resident artist, Mark Dewis, they cover the gaming field fairly well. Lindon is the computer programmer (working slowly away in the basement) and he completes the team. As is always the case with this sort of thing, friends are roped in to help.

For those interested in hardware, the Missing Tiger uses an Apricot computer linked to an LQ 1500.

About a year after the fish shop meeting, their first game was ready for the public. This was *Return From Sirius*. This is their multi-player space game. Its computer moderated and fairly simple to learn. The rules are short and simple – the game is neither.

Later, they took on the production of *The GoBetween*, which is a magazine where the results of board games played by mail could be published. David Cox started this magazine, and the Missing Tigers continued to expand it.

The next game was *Demonsland*. A solo fantasy game with direct contact between player and gamemaster was a natural next step for the Missing Tiger – simply an extention of their existing service. Unfortunately, due to its popularity and the length of time a gamemaster spends on a move, there is a waiting list for playing *Demonsland*.

What lies ahead? There has been Swords and Sorcery, space combat, solo fantasy games, board games played by mail, alternative universes and medieval minatures. What's left?

The Missing Tiger has found something! (Who's that working in the basement?)

CHAMELEON GAMES

FUEDAL LORDS: Chameleon Games now have the software for the games, and will be processing the turns locally. This will reduce the time between turns 2-3 weeks, compared to the slow 5 week turn-around previously suffered.

CRASSIMOFS WORLD: Playtest and revamping of the world continues, as Chameleon gets set to run the game from within Australia. Players will not have to compete with developed overseas groups, as the game is being set up from the start for Australian players.

CAPITOL: The latest addition to their range of games. A game of Xenophobia, Conquest and Space Warfare, that is played with teams of 4 players. Chameleon Games will be running 8 teams of 4 players in the first game, which should be available late July.

UNIVERSE II UPDATE: *Quadrant IIE* is in turmoil with the news that the Etuel system of Denebold has fallen to the Ixtlian Empire. The leader of the blockade, IXV Zulu, (commanded by none other than M. Beamish) has been proclaimed the new Governor of the system. Conflict has been heavy around the system, with the UES Medusa taking a severe beating.

Quadrant IIIE is facing the election of its first UES Co-ordinator, with UES Bistromath clear leader at the early stages. Results should be posted with the next Newsletter.

TERRA II UPDATE: New Australian and American tribes are being placed on the same continent, with contact already made. On the main Australian continent the city of Flyssa is gradually being visited by more and more Australian tribes. Still, the number of English tribes in the area is very large. The efforts of the Darian Raiders to stop trade at Pechak, is slowly losing its effect.

CONQUEST OF INSULA: A game that is based on the Terra II combat system is now open, with the first game already full, and ready to start.

C.R.E. GAMES

C.R.E. Games officially came into existance a little over 4 months ago, but has been in the works for well over a year. The company is run by the husband and wife team of Chris and Nadine Edwards. Chris has been successfully running a private PBM ancients campaign for over 4 years. C.R.E. Games is currently running, or starting shortly, three PBM games.

WHAT ARE PLAY BY MAIL GAMES?

By Kevin Flynn – Australian Wizard

Everyone I'm sure is familiar with chess, and those who have gained some knowledge of the game will realise that chess is easily played by mail (PBM). This is achieved by identifying every square on the board by numbers and letters, and every piece by name. Using this system it is easy to enact the movement of a single piece, and as chess only allows one player to move at a time, the instruction is short and clear.

For eg; QP – Q4, meaning Queen's Pawn to Queen's column, square four.

Keeping a picture of this nice sedate sequence of movement, with only two players involved, we can expand on it to give you an idea of what modern PBM game is. Firstly, expand the size of the board from 64 squares, or reference points, to maybe 600 or more, some games may have a nearly infinite number of reference positions available to the player, others may have less. As in chess, in most PBM games control, or the ability to bring force to bare on a particular spot, is a key to success.

Secondly, expand the number of pieces available and vary the powers of the pieces to give you a large range of options. In some games you may find you will have less pieces to work with than in chess, in others you may end up with thousands of pieces.

Next add in lots of players, each playing in the same game, on the same board, each trying to best the others.

Lastly, let them all move any or all of their pieces at the same time, this is one of the greatest differences between PBM and any other form of game. In PBM each player will give his instructions on how he will move his pieces and then sends these to the Games Master (GM). It is the GM's responsibility to sort through it all and determine the effects of all the moves and reply to the player with a report (whereupon we repeat the procedure).

The effect of this is that the game becomes more complex, unlike chess where you can move a piece to take another, in PBM it is more than likely that the piece you attack will have moved before you can get there, as everything moves at the same time. As you are allowed to move more than one piece however, you could try to cut off all the options available to the enemy piece. Unfortunately, if you succeed at this there is still no guarantee of victory, in PBM the enemy will fight back, you could end up losing by attacking!

More than any other aspect however, it is the multi-player capacity of PBM that intrigues most. With others around you, you have to decide if they are enemies, neutrals or friends. To do this you will have to contact them, either by mail or phone, and get to know them. If they are friendly they may be able to assist you against those who are not. This is known as "diplomacy" and is a fine art that will bring you greater success than anything else.

You now have a rough idea of what PBM games are like. Many variations on the basic theme exist, each depending on the scenario involved for the game. The imagination is the limit and more and more games are appearing all the time. You should consider well what your likes and dislikes are before committing yourself to any one game, ask for rules, read magazines, get opinions. Once involved howeveer, we think you will be hooked.

Do Something... Part 1

By Mervyn Beamish
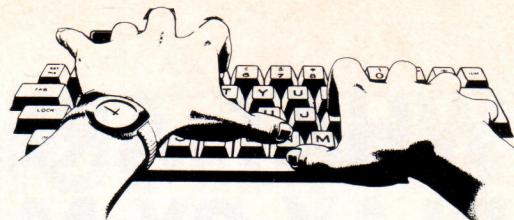
The words *Strategic* and *Tactical* are bandied around the games world like *environment* and *peace* in the real world.

In this series I've taken *strategy* to mean the whole; the selection of aims, the establishment, maintenance or dropping of alliances and the application of resources to achieve the specified aims.

Tactics are the methods of fighting and manoeuvre employed to secure the immediate objective that is in itself part of the strategic plan.

Move options

There are three types of moves a gaming computer can make:

Random – a number is randomly generated and a move is made in relation to that number. Similar to throwing a dice.

Direct – an automatic move from point A to point B no matter what happens. In arcade game the alien space ship fires directly at you not randomly all around the screen. It gives the impression of an intelligent move but is a direct mechanical reaction.

Intelligent – where the computer weighs up and evaluates a situation before it makes the appropriate move.

Moves can and are generally combinations of all three types. There would be little interest in an arcade game where the computer constantly at millisecond intervals shot a laser at you with devastating results. A direct/random combination will fire the laser at irregular intervals and may be at varying degrees of accuracy.

Similarly if a move in chess is evaluated to the 'n'th degree by the computer it could take several days to get a decision on the best move. What if there is more than one best move? Random and direct moves are introduced to reduce the time involved and influence the choice of moves.

Speed is essential in intelligent games as generally a multitude of decisions and evaluations have to be made in a short period of time. It is a funny thing that in face to face gaming we are more patient and willing to give our opponent time to consider his/her move than with a computer where impatience grows if it takes more than a few moments to make a similar decision.

In many cases BASIC is quite satisfactory for strategic games especially if the programmer takes notice of manufacturers notes on the way BASIC can be speeded up with the intelligent use of variables and subroutines etc. If the memory is available a *compiler* may assist but it is not the panacea of all evils.

However as one moves into more complex games the necessity will eventually arise to learn Machine or Assembly language.

I have overlooked such languages as FORTH, PASCAL, COMAL etc. but they are not currently in wide use by home computerists. Popularity is growing in some areas.

The Board

Let us look at a fairly simple Hexagraphical two dimentional games board similar to the one used in OGRE™.

We could number each hex which on figure 1 would mean that we would need 218 variables in a BASIC program and a equal number of

IF VARIABLE = HEX NUMBER THEN...

or similar routines to locate a player on the map.

Arrays, for example A(G,13), are a lot easier to use. We can read locations similar to the way we read a street directory. Most home computers will not accept an alphanumeric arrays so, in A(G,13), the G would have to be made numeric. The ASCII value of G is 71. Commodore users do not confuse this with Commodore ASCII. If we refer to figure 1 the numeric value we want is 7 (seven hexes across) therefore as G equals ASCII 71 we will need to subtract 64 to get a value 7:

$$G = ASC(G) - 64$$

and our array is now – A(7,13) or the hex seven across and 13 up. This same equation will work with all other alphbetical grid references on our hex map (figure 1).

NOTE this is not the generally accepted way of plotting hex position but will suffice for our current examples.

Let us say that our game is not unlike draughts that members of two armies face each other on opposite ends of the map and that their aim is to capture and, make their own, tanks parked at these ends, at the same time as preventing the seizure of tanks from their own end of the board. Soldiers can move forward and on the diagonal only and tanks in any direction to a maximum of 3 hex in a straight line (figure 2). A tank cannot move over any other piece on the board. A player can move into a hex occupied by the opposing player and remove his counter from the board.

Here we have what is called a zero sum game. At the beginning of the game both sides are equal. The sum of each players value subtracted from the other is zero (0). For sake of clarity I will say that the computer is the white army and will adopt the computer's side of the game.

Let us say that each army has six soldiers and that it takes one soldier to drive a tank. Each soldier is worth one (+1) and a tank five (+5) therefore an enemy soldier and tank are worth -1 and -5 respectively.

The value given to a soldier or a tank is called its *count* or *weight*.

Material Count

The simplest evaluation a computer can do is a *Material Count* (MC). That is to tally up the value of a player's pieces on the board and subtract the opposition's existing pieces.

In figure 1 there are:

7 White soldiers	7 × +1	= +7
1 White tank	1 × +5	= +5
5 Black soldiers	5 × −1	= −5
1 Black tank	1 × −5	= −5
	MC total	= +2

So based on a *Material Count* the computer has a advantage of +2 and naturally the opposition has a disadvantage of −2 However the *Material Count* can only be made after a move.

Move Evaluation

To make use of a *Material Count* the computer needs to

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3
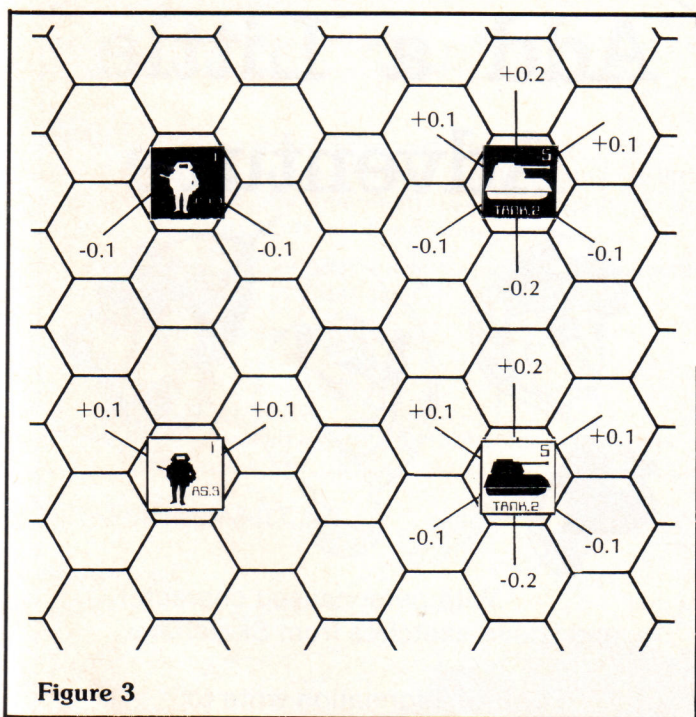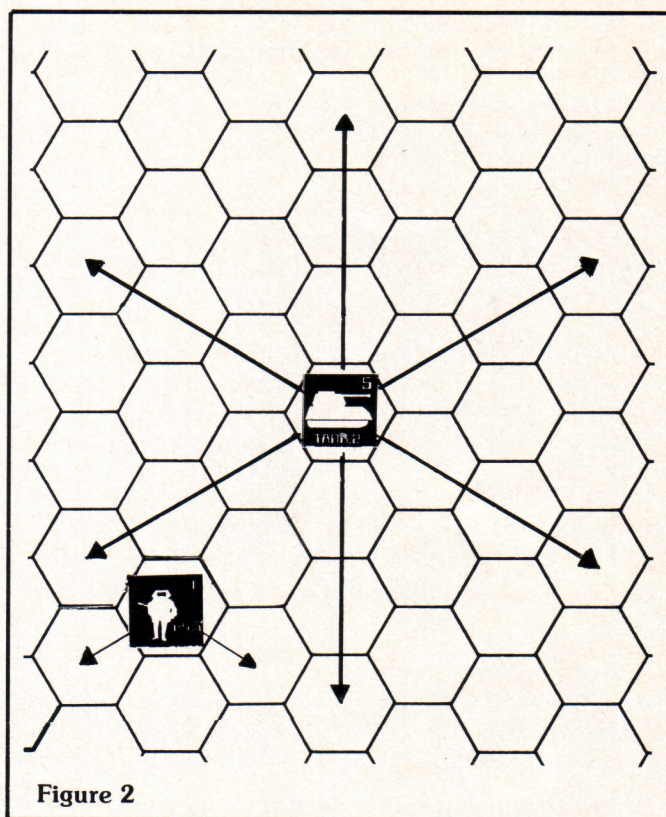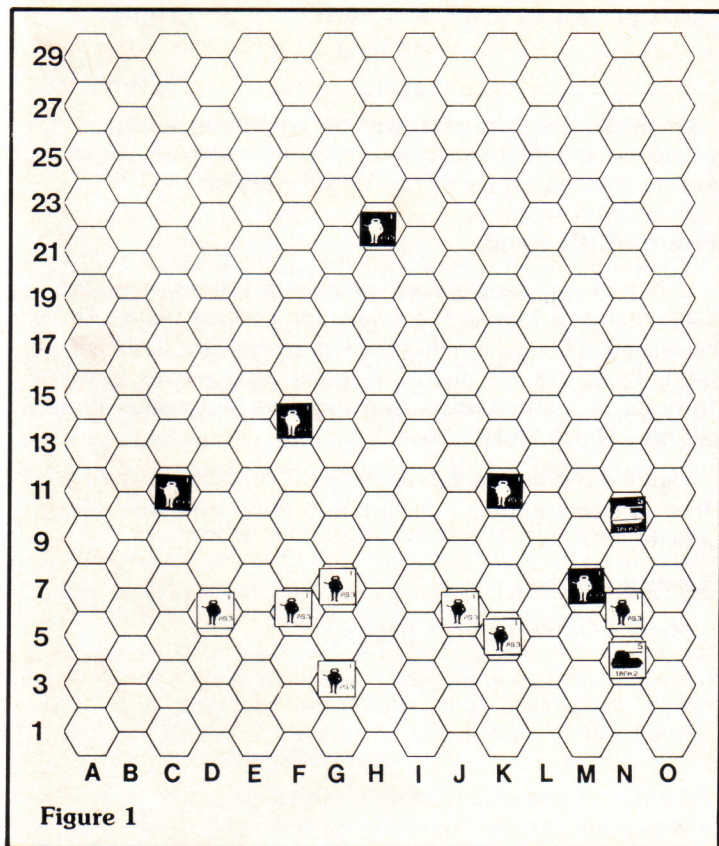
Position Evaluation

Based on our current *Material Count* the computer is feeling pretty smug with a +2 advantage. However both *Move Evaluation* and *Material Count* do not take into consideration the positions of the pieces on the board. Give each soldier a positional weight based on the distance he has moved from his base line towards the opposite end of the board (for the sake of the exercise a tank will have the same positional weight as a soldier). Let us say each diagonal hex forward is +0.1 and back -0.1 (figure 3).

Figure 4
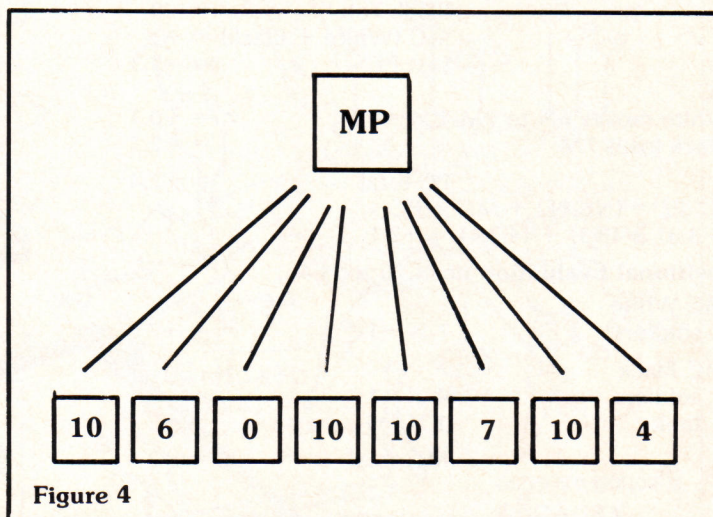
temporarily make every legal move available to it. Temporarily removing any pieces that it conquers and do a Material Count of each move. Based on these Material Counts the computer can then decide which is the most beneficial move to make.

In figure 1 moving the soldier in N,6 to M,7 would benefit the computer +1 for taking out the black soldier in M,7. This whole process is called a *Move Evaluation*.

Now let us look at the situation:

MC (refer first calculations) = +2
Positional Count (PC)   (row×weights× ±0.1)
for figure 1
MC (refer first calculations) = +2
Positional Count (PC)   (units×row× ±0.1)
for figure 1

WHITE ARMY
Row 7G	$1 \times 7 \times +1$	$= +0.7$
Row 6D,F,J,N	$4 \times 6 \times +0.1$	$= +2.4$
Row 5K	$1 \times 5 \times +0.1$	$= +0.5$
Row 4N	$1 \times 4 \times +0.1$	$= +0.4$
Row 3G	$1 \times 3 \times +0.1$	$= +0.3$
	White Total	$= +4.3$

BLACK ARMY (work from 30th row)
Row 22H	$1 \times (30 - 22) \times -0.1$	$= -0.8$
Row 14F	$1 \times (30 - 14) \times -0.1$	$= -1.6$
Row 11C,K	$2 \times (30 - 11) \times -0.1$	$= -3.8$
Row 10N	$1 \times (30 - 10) \times -0.1$	$= -1.1$
Row 7M	$1 \times (30 - 7) \times -0.1$	$= -2.3$
	Black Total	$= -9.6$

White PC + Black PC + MC = *Positional Evaluation* (PE)
$(+4.3) + (-9.6) + (+2)$ $= -3.3$

The computer is not quite so smug now. With *Positional Evaluation* the computer is starting to get feed back that will enable it to make tactical decisions.

Now if we go one step further and do both a *Move Evaluation* and *Positional Evaluation* on the possible moves made by our opposition when we move N,6 to M,7 another interesting thing will happen. Our Move Evaluation (Material Count) will still remain +2 but our *Positional Evaluation* (PE) is quite different because the opposing army can take the white tank in N,4 with its tank in N,10. If we had left the soldier in N,6 we would have blocked the move or tricked the opposition into taking our soldier next move leaving his tank open to ours in N,4 – loss of 1 for a gain of 5!

Positional Evaluation of the N,6 takes N,7 move is:

WHITE ARMY
7 soldiers	$7 \times +1$	$= +7$
1 tank	$1 \times +5$	$= +5$
	White total	$= +12$

BLACK ARMY
4 soldiers	4×-1	$= -4$
1 tank	1×-5	$= -5$
	Black Total	$= -9$
	MC (White + Black)	$= +3$
	Last PE	$= -3.3$

PC
White moves 6N to 7M	$1 \times +0.1$	$= +0.1$
Black loses 7M		$= +2.3$
	PC total	$= +2.4$

N7 PE = (N6 PE) + MC + PC
$(-3.3) + (+3) + (+2.4) = +2.1$

Positional Evaluation on N,10 to N,4

MC White
7 soldiers	7×-1	$= +7$

MC Black
4 soldiers	4×-1	$= -4$
1 tank	1×-5	$= -5$
	MC total	$= -2$

PC
White loses 4N		$= -4$
Black move 10N to 4N	6×-0.1	$= -0.6$
	PC total	$= -1$
	4N PE	$= -0.9$

Obviously the further ahead the computer evaluates the greater the information it has to make a decision on. We will go further into this aspect in Part II of the series.

From a little seed...

It is time to plant a seed to grow a *Games Tree*. Let us diagramatically look at the evaluation process (figure 4). We have a move or position that we wish to evaluate; a Move Point (MP). From this MP there are eight legal moves available. Through the methods discussed above we find a value for each option – 10,6,0,10,10,7,10,4.

Figure 4 represents the first series of branches in our *Games Tree*. A tree I hope to nurture and grow over this series of articles.
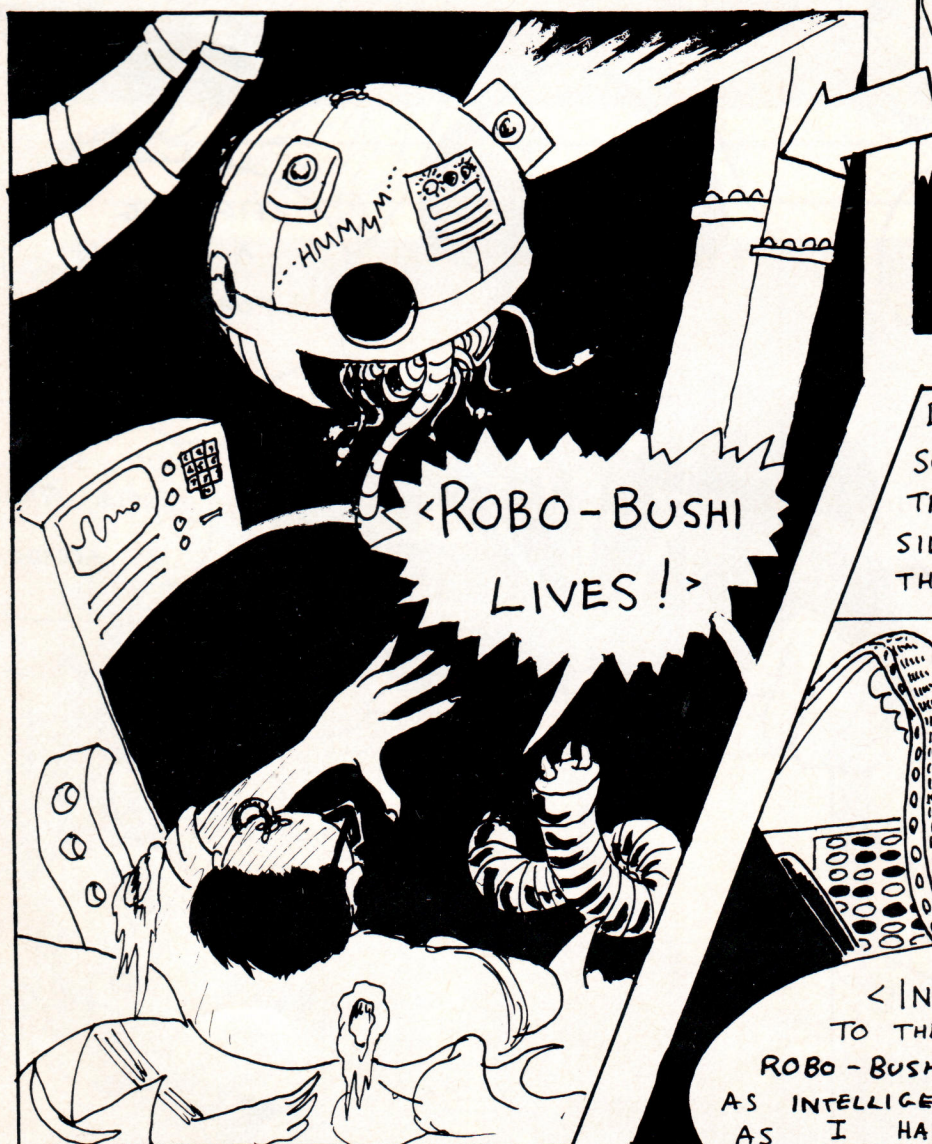
Competition
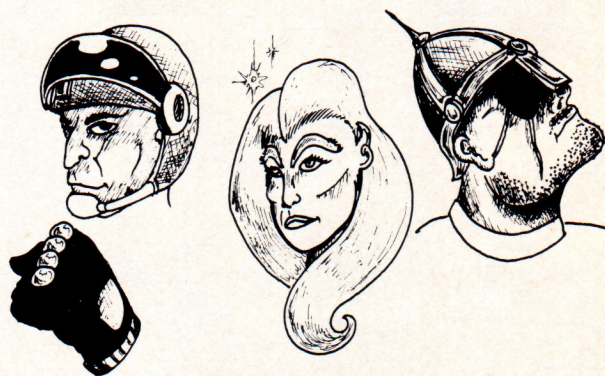
NOW FROM THE PEN OF MAD MARK DEWIS, COMES A HERO TO END ALL HEROES! WITH A WHOOSH OF JETS AND A HEART OF GOLD, ADVENTURE COMICS IS PROUD TO PRESENT: THE ORIGIN OF...

<NO! IT'S IMPOSSIBLE...!>
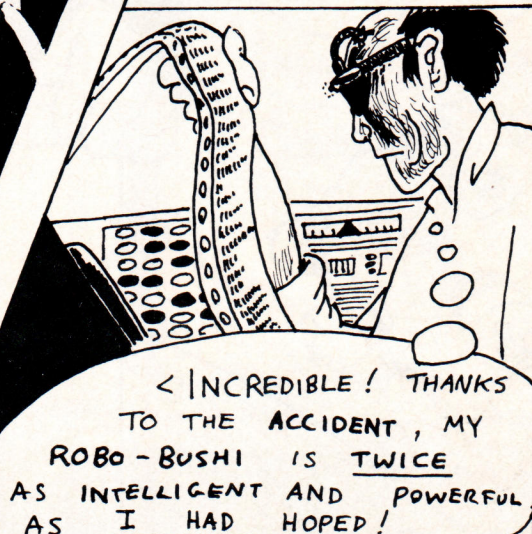
THE MIGHTY ROBO BUSHI

PENCILLER } "MAD" MARK DEWIS   EDITOR: MARK DEWIS
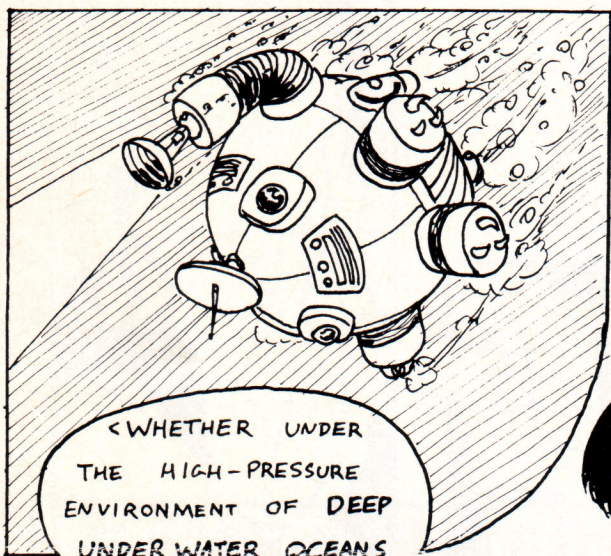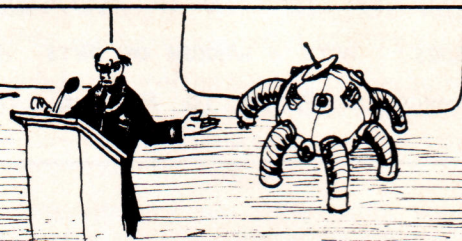INKER
WRITER

PART 2

HMMMM

<ROBO-BUSHI LIVES!>

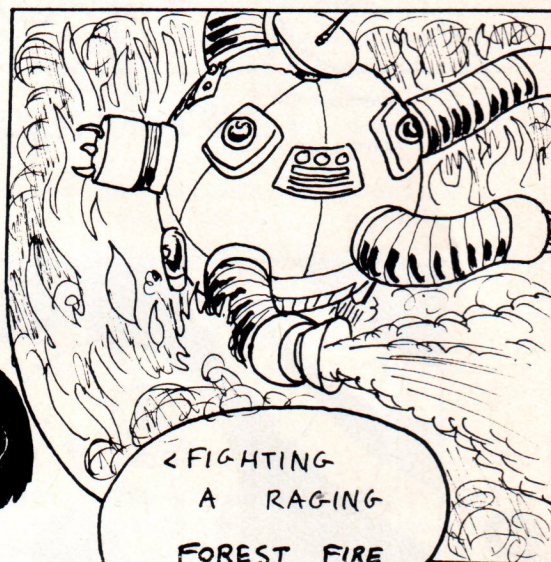DOCTOR HACHINAGA SOON FOUND THAT THERE WERE OTHER SIDE-EFFECTS OF THE POWER-SURGE:

<INCREDIBLE! THANKS TO THE ACCIDENT, MY ROBO-BUSHI IS TWICE AS INTELLIGENT AND POWERFUL AS I HAD HOPED!

"...ANY QUESTIONS?"

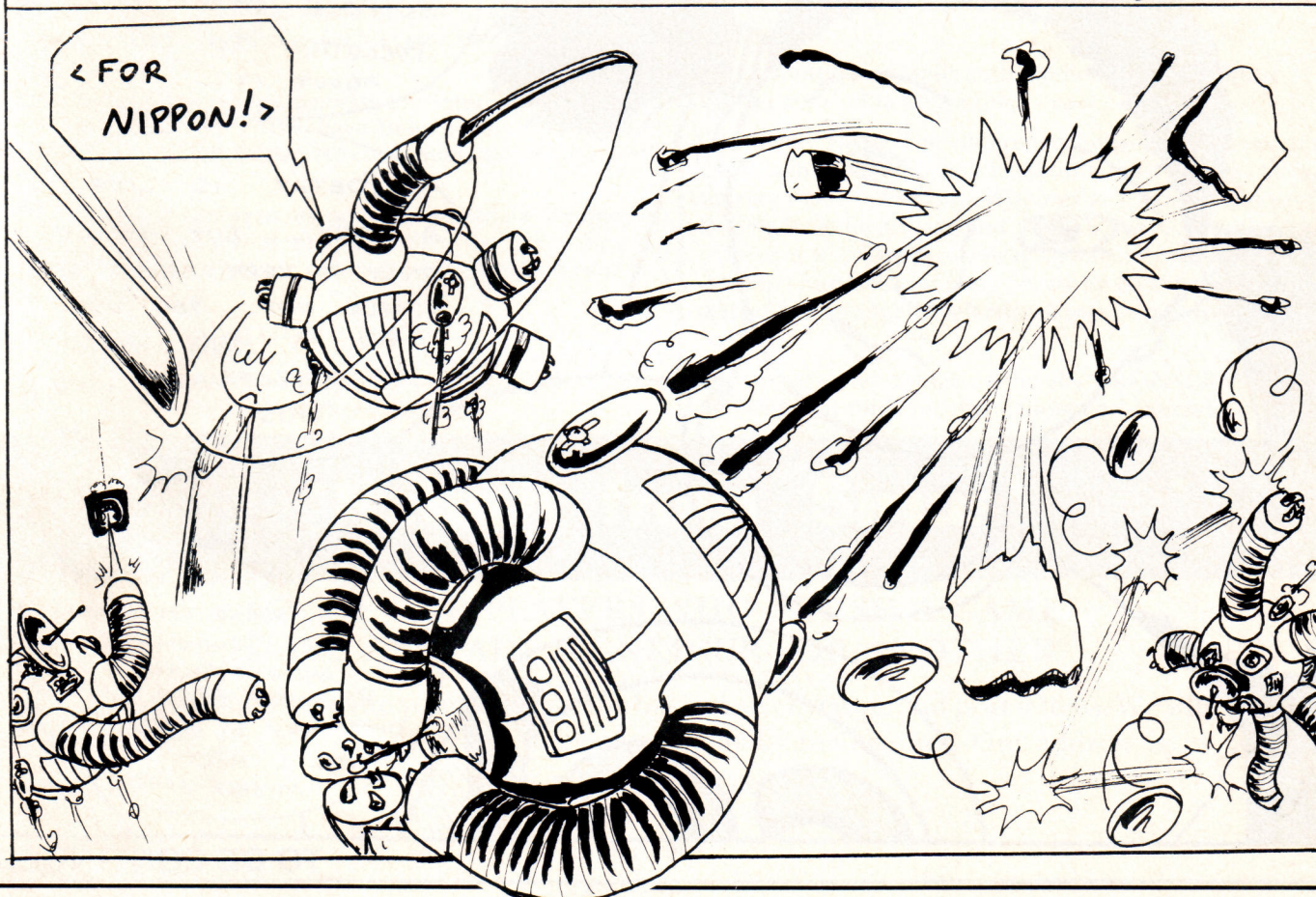<DR. HACHINAGA, THIS ROBOT OF YOURS SEEMS VERY POWERFUL FOR ITS ROLE...>
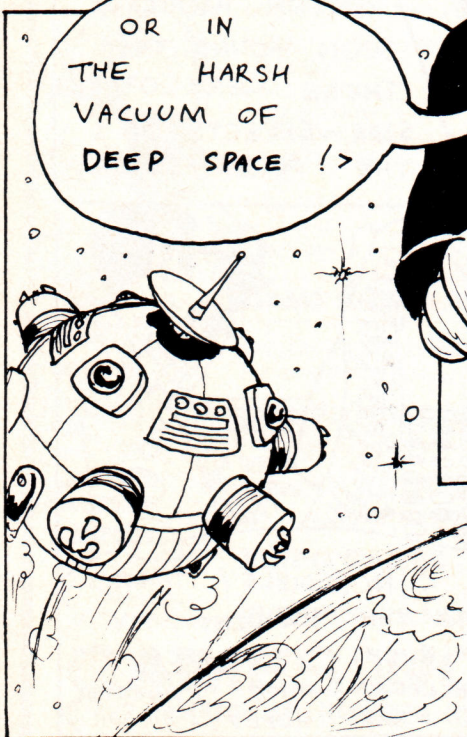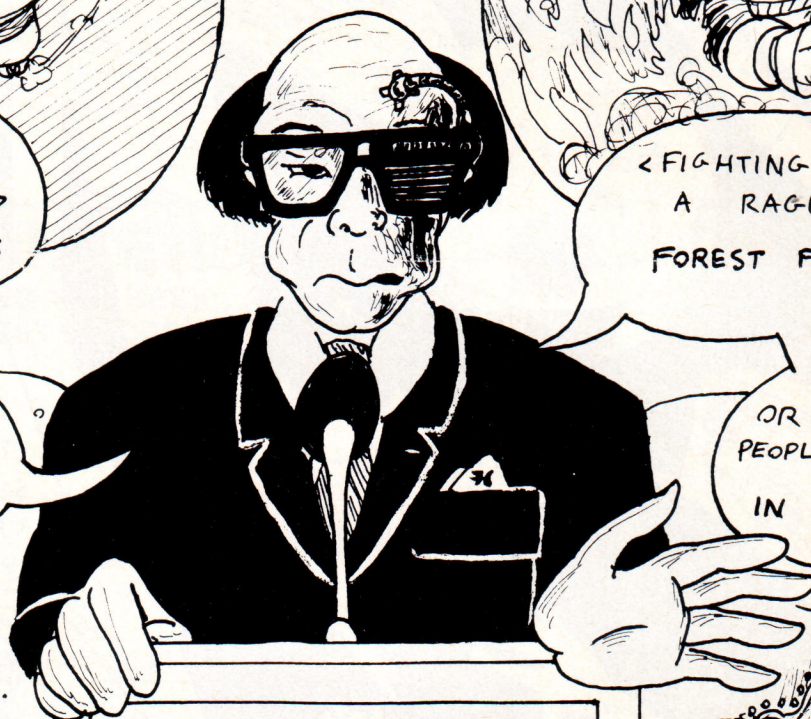
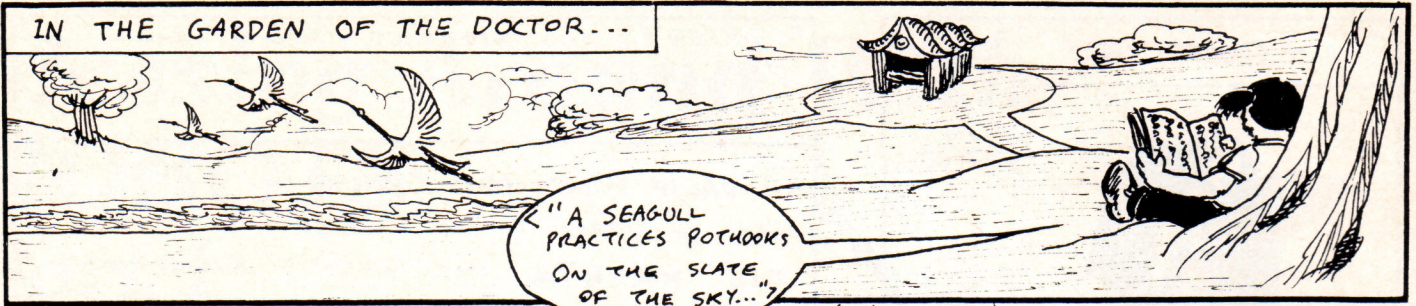"...AREN'T YOU WORRIED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF IT FALLING INTO THE WRONG HANDS?"

<A VALID POINT, MISS CHÔCHÔ! YES, THIS HAD OCCURRED TO ME — WHICH IS WHY THE XR-47a HAS BEEN PROGRAMMED WITH THE LATEST IN NON-AGRESSIVE SOFTWARE PERSONALITIES. THE O.I.T. COMPUTER DEPT. HAVE INSPECTED THIS RROGRAMMING AND JUDGED IT INCORRUPTABLE!>

<EXCEPT BY THE MAN WHO WROTE IT!>

AND SO, HAVING REASSURED THE O.I.T. DIRECTORS, DR HACHINAGA BEGAN THE TRAINING OF ROBO BUSHI. THE NEWLY-CREATED WAR MACHINE WAS TO BE TRAINED IN THE TRADITIONAL WAYS OF THE JAPANESE NOBLE WARRIORS AS WELL AS HIS OWN WEAPONRY.
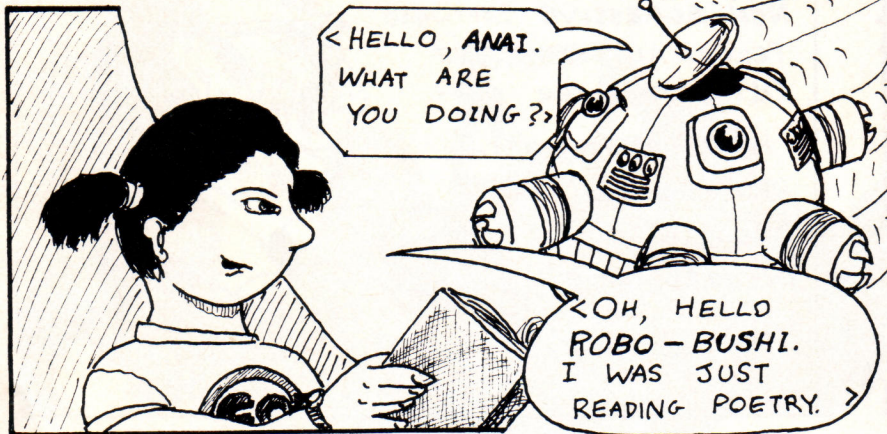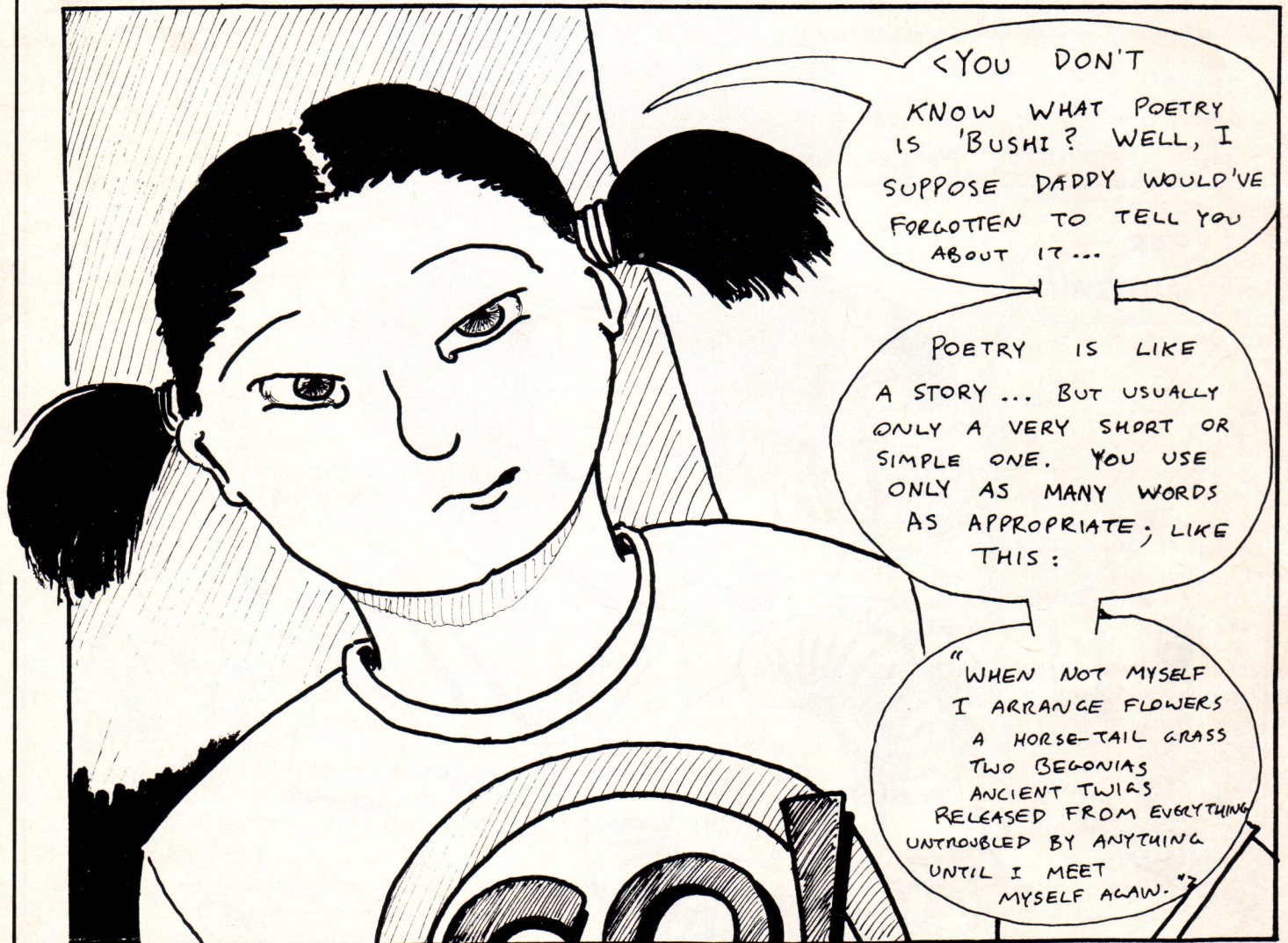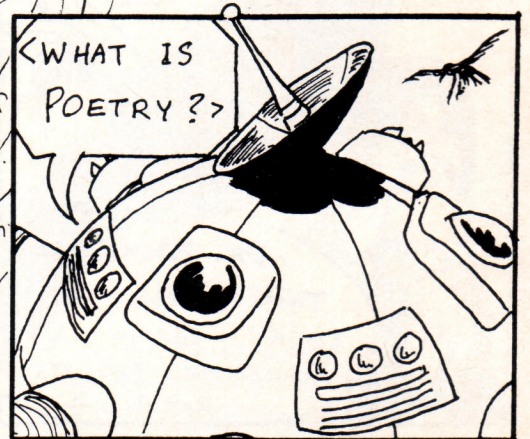
<FOR NIPPON!>

COMPETITIONS

Last issue we started two competitions one for games players and the model makers – the artists were mixed up in both.

COMPETITION 1

"We have, compliments of DAWN TRADING, six SF3D ORIGINAL Armour Fighting Suit plastic model kits to award to the first six modeller submissions we publish These submissions can be:

(1) A scratch built model – photographs with 300-500 word description. The model need not be large but should demonstrate some aspect of scratch building.

(2) SF Kit Model – photographs with 300-500 word description. Should demonstrate some building or finishing technique.

(3) Dream Model – Sketches plus suitable description of the unique SF model that you'd like to design and build."

The competition is **still open.**

SF3D ORIGINAL – Mark Savage of Putney, Sydney sent us this beautifully finished SF3D ORIGINAL model. Congratulations Mark you've got another to work on.
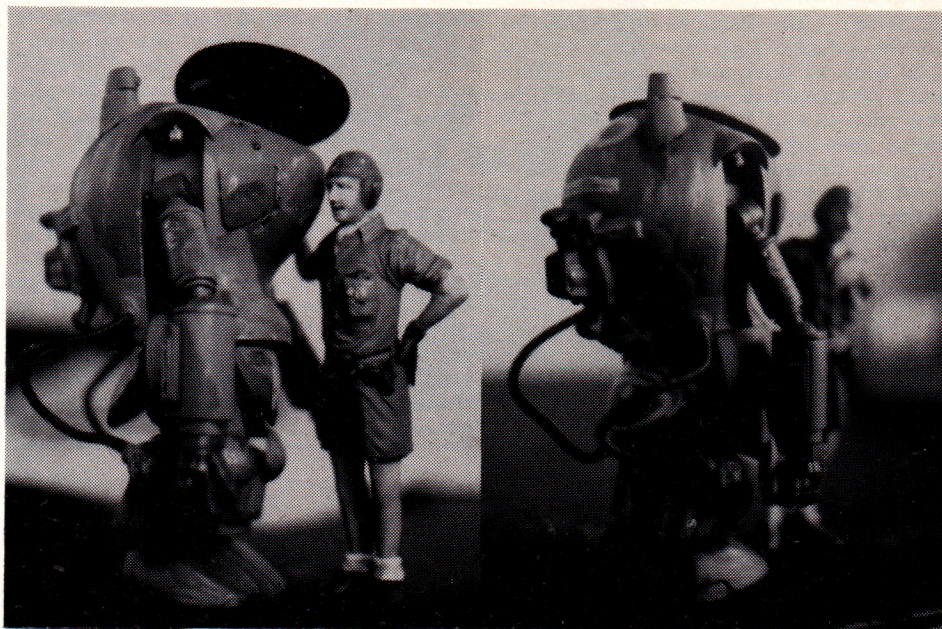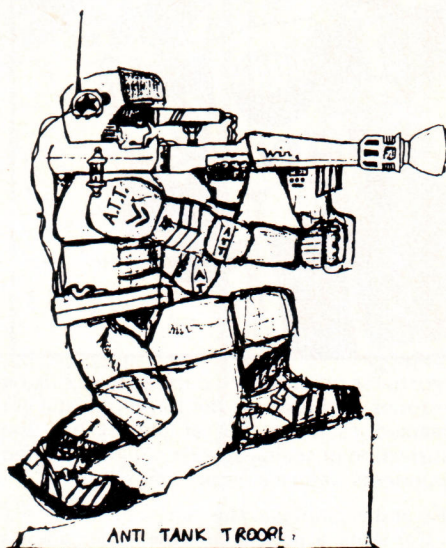
Semi Armoured Anti Tank Troop (SAAT) – Achieved military fame during it's role in the IRAN/IRAQ CONFRONTATION which took place on the banks of the Euphrates River on the 4th July, 1990. The performance of this armoured suit impressed the military leaders of Iran and three hundered were ordered immediately.

These three hundred troops became known as the "Hurricanes" and were greatly feared by Iraq's tank forces due to their extremely powerful weapon: The WINCHESTER TANKBUSTER. One rocket charge could penetrate a tank's armour and completely devastate it's innards in 7 milliseconds.

POSEABLE, FULLY ARTICULATED, 170mm HIGH, 1/10 SCALE, MILITARY FIGURE
★ White plastic armour plating.
★ Fabric, wire and leather parts.
★ 'Battle Boots' complete with steel caps, velcro and rubber soles.
★ Servo activated, spring loaded 'Wincherster Tankbuster'.
★ Landscape platform

This entry won Daniel Zillessen of Coolbinia, WA a SF3D ORIGINAL kit. – Good work Daniel.

COMPETITION 2

"We have, thanks to VENTURA GAMES, six boxed games (Role and Board) to award to the first six games/art submissions we publish. These submissions can be.

(1) Starship/Character design along with 300-500 word description, relevant charts and if possible sketches. The aim is to demonstrate the reasons behind the design. Any commercially available game system may be used including PBM games.

(2) Scenario Introduction: Write the first 300-500 words of a SF/Fantasy game introduction or short story along with sufficient outline notes to visualise the story line.

(3) SF/Fantasy art – computer art, comic strip character – the field is open." Competition 2 is **still open.** Prizes still to be distributed include *Battlecars* (Games Workshop) and *Star Fleet Battles* (T.F.G)

Mark Savages SF3D ORIGINAL model

ANTI TANK TROOP.
Daniel Zillessen's Semi Armoured Anti Tank Troop

TRAVELLER(tm) ANIMAL: Slime Pit

This animal is for the Traveller Role-playing game system.

The Slime pit is a carnivorous animal which is found under the ground surface in the wet marsh area of several planets.

The trap can only be seen by the ring of branch like feelers which detect the presence of its next meal. When an animal brushes on these branchlike objects and stands in the circle of branches the membrane covering the stomach opens and the membrane closes over the victim.

Inside the stomach the victim is held down by the five tenticles and each has a row of stingers which after thirty seconds of contact with the victim will paralyse the victim. Then the victim drowns in the green slimes which fills the stomach and also digests everything on and in the carcass even the plastic is used in some way.

All wastes are removed from the Slime pits body through the Third Stomach. The digging

arm digs a pit next to the Slime pits body for this waste and uses the soil to produce the slime.

This is a very effective way of killing which the Slime pits has evolved over hundreds of years.
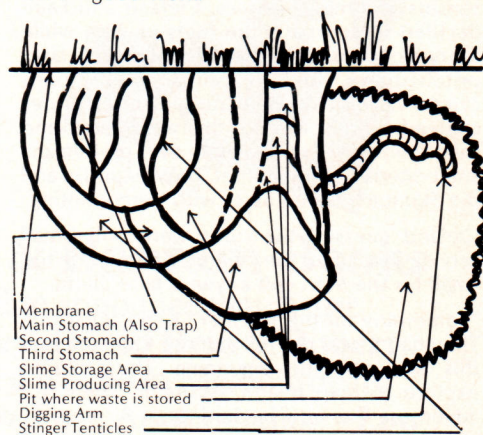
If a character finds a slime pit it must roll 7+ to fall into the waste pit even before the character reaches the slime pit.

The slime pits are a real force to be reckoned with, good luck in attacking them.

Weight Hits Armour Wounds Weapons
Slime Pit (Trapper) 30,000kg 25/15 Battle +15 Stingers *AAFOSO
*Note: AA means Attacks always.

Yuk! – give the man a game!
submission from Richard Thomson, Duncraig, WA. – good work.

Membrane
Main Stomach (Also Trap)
Second Stomach
Third Stomach
Slime Storage Area
Slime Producing Area
Pit where waste is stored
Digging Arm
Stinger Tenticles
Richard Thomson's Slime Pit

DOWN TURBO RIVER
A SF SCENARIO by L.J. GAVAN (14yrs)

INTRODUCTION – This is a scenario for any SF game. It's in a story using made up weapons and equipment.

The scenario is set on a planet that is very lush with forests and is quite humid. The planet is either made up of huge seas or gigantic rainforests (similar to the planet "The Return Of The Jedi" was on except this is more humid). The name of the planet is Lennsgnolle (pronounced Lens-hole).

In Lennsgnolle there is a strip of swampy river, it faintly resembles the Amazon on Earth, this is called Turbo River.

THE STORY – The Skimmer sped along just upon the surface of Turbo River. Its three crew taking turns to drive and be look-out. (For details of characters refer below). Cleland knew what to look for the best because he studied cults similar to the one they were looking for. He remembered the representative from Carmere & Co. coming to him as he did to the other two and asking them to find the Kran cult remains, located somewhere near Turbo River.

Carmere & Co. hired the three to go and find the remains of the Kran cult and clear and secure it so scientists could come and research the remains. Then when they had found the out the information they will sell it to a Galactic museum or something for a very hefty price, of course the three explorers get a handsome reward for their troubles too.

So here he was looking for a possible entrance to some ruins in a hostile environment, who knows? It might not even be there. Well, at least the pay was good.

"Hey! What's that? Isn't it ruins?" Kerry suddenly burst out.

"Hold it a sec and I'll turn around," said Faire who was driving at the time.

The skimmer slowed down to low-power manoeuvering speed and finally stopped where Kerry first saw the ruins, Faire kept the rocket ready for a quick escape if they had to.

Cleland took out his magni-glasses and studied the general area. Cleland studied the general area but suddenly, something caught his attention and he immediately turned around and zoomed in.

"What's the matter? See something interesting?" inquired Faire.

"I saw some movement, can't trace it now" replied Cleland.

After the crew had swept the area with tracers, sensors and magni-glasses, Cleland and Faire decided to approach the ruins on foot while Kerry stood guard in the Skimmer. With laser pistols drawn, the two approached the ruins carefully. Suddenly three burly furred creatures charged, snarling towards the two. Cleland and Faire immediately fired shots over their heads and bolted for the Skimmer. They leaped in and the Skimmer roared away with Kerry piloting.

Cleland guessed the ruins were only small serving as a lair for the creatures, they were too small for the Kran cult anyway; false alarm.

"Something on the scanner" Kerry burst out. They had found the ruins of the Kran cult, but this was only the beginning. They had to explore it, map it and secure it. Their real adventure was now beginning.....

THE PARTY
1. Cleland – Skilled electronics expert. Knows and studies cults.
2. Faire – Game hunter. Knows survival skills-veteran.
3. Kerry – (Female) First-aid expert. Can use gun if necessary.

A game to Gavan Lim-Joon of Rosanna, VIC-keep that imagination working.

MAD MARK (CAR WARS)

Cyclist – 1, Gunner – 0. No Money. Owns a Shogun 100 and five grenades.

Justification/Description:
Mad Mark is a Car Wars Character I found necessary to create to explain the rather suicidal playing-style that I adopt when playing Car Wars. It all began about a year ago when I first bought a copy of the game; dismantling the pieces, I set up a few road duels, and was immediately hooked! Blazing machine guns, skidding vehicles, spectacular rams and flips...what more could a budding anarchist and gamer ask for? However, as soon as I introduced my friends to the game and started to play against other people, I discovered an annoying situation: I was the unluckiest/worst player in existence. Time after time I under-armoured, overarmoured, undergunned or made stubborn habits with my cars. Adding to this the fact that my fellow players (on the whole) were quicker to select the best designs and tactics...well, it does tend to demoralize a guy.

It got to the point where I decided to give up on weapons, and just ram the buggers...I still got creamed as often, but at least I had the satisfaction of seeing at least one of my hated opponents' vehicles reduced to scrap.

Also at this point was the matter of characters. In Car Wars, a pedestrian's life expectancy is about a second or two. Now, although there is a courtesy rule that non-belligerent peds should be allowed to escape from a duel, the mortality rate is still pretty high, what with fireballs, explosions, being shot up by accident and on purpose, out-of-control cars and similar interesting happenings. This meant that our beloved "John T. Szern's" and "Menacing Michael's" would last one, maybe three combats and then be sent to the great arena in the sky.

I invented the name "Mad Mark" some time ago, but had been saving it for a special occasion. Finally the time came: a $25,000 duel between four players! Eagerly I designed the perfect Luxury ram-mobile...only to find myself in an expanding fireball after our resident "Laser their tyres off" specialist had taken two shots at me. Heartbroken at losing my magnificently-named character, I continued with such worthies as "Mad Mark's Brother", "Mad Mark's Sister-in-Law" and "Mad Mark's Dentist". It wasn't the same.

But slowly an idea formed...Mad Mark had been my personal pseudonym, right? So if he were the direct projection of myself, then he could never die!

But I didn't want to keep resurrecting the guy...I mean, this was Car Wars, not D & D (tm) (Mad Mark was too poor to get Gold Cross). Then I had my brainwave: Mad Mark is not a person, but a philosophy; a way of life! This gave me the idea of creating what amounted to a Mad Mark religion...hundreds of lunatics who all called themselves Mad Mark...and a founder, a real maniac (my original Mad Mark was a follower)...

This was the result:
Mad Mark was a biker, who always brought bad luck on gangs. After massacre after massacre, he found himself unable to join any pack at all (even the suicidals...they weren't that suicidal) and was forced to roam the highways alone. He didn't even own a decent bike...just a crummy shogun 100 and a few grenades. Grenades were the one solace Mad Mark had in life. He loved the way they made pretty "bang-bang" noises and sort of spread folks around...such a pity he only had five. Anyway, in a desperate attempt to get himself some more respectable gear (and more lovely grenades), he rolled into Midville and challenged the city's top "duellest to a cycle vs car contest". The media snapped it up as "Demented Biker features in Suicide Duel", which was a pretty accurate description.

Well, the crazy contest was featured on national television, and to no-one's suprise Mad Mark rammed the $50,000 luxury and was steamrollered. That seemingly was the end to it, but a week later, reports began to come in of weird attacks and suicidal duellists who chose to all call themselves Mad Mark.

Cyclists, Autoduellists, Helicopter pilots (!), even mechanics. Some pedestrians began leaping into Arenas and throwing themselves under cars with live grenades clutched in their hands (most of which rolled away and exploded harmlessly). Mad Mark Mania had arrived.

Game Notes: Mad Markers are a lunatic group who claim that it isn't when or why you die, but the amount of futility and sheer flamboyance of your death that counts. All members call themselves Mad Mark, which would cause some confusion if any of them survived for very long. Preferred weapons are the hand grenade and bare hands.

And another game this time to MadMark of Tasmania.

COMPETITION 3 – PBM
Complements of The Australian Wizard. Set-up and eleven turns in any new game of EARTHWOOD ($46.00 worth). Read Cameron Thomas's column this issue. The competition is restricted to those who are not already playing EARTHWOOD. The prize will go to what the editor decides is the most interesting or mischievous PBM rumour he receives before the next issue. Any commercially available game in Australia and New Zealand will be accepted. (KIWIS if your entry arrives late we'll still look after you!).

When writing your rumour it should be max 400 words, clear and make some sense to nonplayers.

COMPETITION 4 – COMPUTER
We have 5 copies of THE ADVENTURERS HANDBOOK by Mike Gerrard – a work book for adventure players and programmers. These book will go to the best examples of short BASIC programs (any machine) that demonstrate the concepts discussed in the DO

NEWS & VIEWS

Mervyn Beamish

NEW PBM GAME

Richard Russel of SMART PIKE PBM has informed me of a PBM game he runs called *Cosmic Conquest*. I've sent a copy of the rules etc. to Cameron Thomas for evaluation. No doubt Cameron will introduce and comment on the game through his regular Play By Mail column.

In the meantime here is some sketch details. *Cosmic Conquest* is a game of galactic exploration and planetary conquest. Up to twenty players contend with each other for control of planets and space fleets. The player must explore and conquer as many planets as possible. To achieve this aim the player must build combat fleets and explore the unknown worlds. The player who achieves a set victory pointscore (can differ with each game) first is the winner.

Current turn fees are $1.50 with $4.00 for rules.

Richard says "Although the games is fairly simple I think the cost makes it attractive, especially to people just getting into PBM."
For further information contact SMART SPIKE PBM 1 Sarah Cres., Baulkham Hills 2153

SCIENCE FICTION

A Review of Speculative Literature.

SCIENCE FICTION has been published since 1977 and its editor, Van Ikin, has twice won the Australian SF Achievement award for Best Australian Science Fiction and Fantasy Editor.

The magazine has featured interviews with some of the most interesting names in SF/speculative literature field – overseas writers like Roger Zelazny, Stanislow Lem, Frank *Dune* Herbert, and Australians like Damien Broderick, George Turner, Lee Harding and David Ireland; film maker Peter Weir and the internationally renowned Australian SF artist, Stan Pitt.

Feature articles have dealt with the works of writers as diverse as Kurt Vonnegut Jr, J.B. Ballard, H.G. Wells, Gregory Benford and Jack Vance.

The magazine's regular illustrator is Sydney artist Nick Strathopoulos, winner of the 1984 and 1985 Australian SF Achievement Awards as Best SF and Fantasy Artist.

The Editor, Dr Ikin, is currently the regular SF columnist for The Sydney Morning Herald newspaper.

Award this press release has been awarded *Best Demonstrative SF Names Dropping Award of 1985*. Alternatively one could use it as a Whos Who of SF or just get a copy of the magazine to see for yourself that it is an excellent publication. Issued three times a year, subscription $10 or single copies $4 – further details:- Dr V. Ikin, Department of English, University of Western Australia, Nedlands, WA 6009. (Refer also advertisement this issue.)

SF CONVENTIONS

AUSSIECON II – Authors attending include Gene Wolfe, Hal Clement, Frank Herbert, Ted White, Paul Collins, Anne McCaffreyy, Clare Bell, Terry Dowling, Larry Niven, Russell Blackford, M. Coleman Easton, Frederick Pohl, David Brin, Harlan Ellison, Robert Silverberg, Damien Broderick, Leanne Frahm, Kieth Taylor, Edward Bryant, Alexis Gilliland, George Turner, Jack L. Chalker, Lee Harding, Wynne Whiteford and Bob Shaw.

If you need another attraction I'll be the guy asleep behind the KIM BOOKS Huckster table please wake me with the rustle of money and say hello.

I think you'll be a bit late at this stage but more information can be obtained from:- AUSSIECON II, GPO Box 2253U, Melbourne 3001.

WHERE NO MAN HAS GONE BEFORE – A convention to be held in Adelaide aiming at a mixed audience and covering a range of areas including SF media, literacy and present advances in technology. October 19th to 20th.

Further information:- Gill Curtin C/- 72 Seaview Rd., Tennyson SA 5022.

LON-CON '85 the 2nd National Doctor Who Convention for the Supreme Council of Time Lords is to be held on 7th and 8th of December somewhere in Tasmania (Launceston I think). Special guests are Jan Peady, ABC employee in charge of ALL Dr Who public relations in Taswegial (Tassy for us non-converts) Gary Armstrong with his K-9 (I gather Gary doesn't know this yet) and Fan Guest of honour Dallas Jones (subject to the quantum alignment of the molecular time sub-structure within his digital watch.).

I'd love to tell you where to get further information but the absent minded Doctor dropped it, along with his jelly babies, three series back – try Dr Who Fan Club, PO Box 90, Beaconsfield 7251

CAPCON – the 1987 National Australian SF Convention. The organisers are not sure when where or how but they are trying for a Guest of Honour in Robert L. Asprin - and his wife Lynn Abbey. Further information:- Box 312, Fyshwick 2609.

GALATIC TOURS CONVENTION – The multi-media Science Fiction/Science fact Convention of 1986 to be held in March at the Melbourne Town House. At this convention you will beable to visit the full size model of the bridge of the United Federation of Planets Starship, 'Enterprise', come into the Dr's Tardis, see the HAMILLS display and many more. Visit the Hugsters room, and the display of modern technology from all over the world. There will be discussion panels, artshow, fashion parade films and videos etc......

Contact The Chairman, 29 Connell Drive, Melton South, VIC 3338

SWANCON XI – will be held over the Easter Weekend (March 28 - 31, 1986) at Miss Maud's Hotel, 97 Murray St Perth. Guests of honour are C.J. Cherryh and Jack Herman. If its any help I'll be there (that should ruin any chance of success). Further information:- SWANCON XI, PO Box 318, Nedlands, WA 6009.

FANZINES

THE NOTIONAL – described as a SF newszine/genzine and is Edited by Leigh Edmonds. Issue three was dated June 85 and the publication shows a lot of promise. Subscription (Australia) is $10.00 (12 issues).

Further information:- Leigh Edmonds, PO Box 433, Civic Square, ACT 2608, Australia.

THYME – a definite fanzine now in issue numbers approaching 50. A rather layback SF publication but you need to know your SF jargon to make very much sense out of some of the published items. Subscriptions $5.00 (eight issues). Further information:- PO Box 273 Fitzroy VIC 3065.

NEW ZEALAND

Battlecry 85

"Roleplaying and wargaming have become very popular hobbies around the world. In New Zealand, especially over the last two or three years the hobby has grown to fairly major proportions, now with three specialist shops in Auckland. Whitcoulls alone sold a record $1 million worth of roleplaying books and equipment, last year....."

Thus began the press release for *Battlecry 85* a wargaming, roleplaying and related hobbies public exhibition held 17th to 18th August at the Auckland University Students Association cafeteria building.

A little too late for the exhibition but KIWIS might like to make contact with the organising group – AMERICA/STG, C/- AUSA, Private Bag, Auckland University.

PLAY BY MAIL

WORLD EMPORER: A game of WORLD CONQUEST with a simple game system which allows players to concentrate on playing the game, not reading the rules. Game 1 has already started, and response at this stage has been very positive with players expressing many favourable comments.

BLACK MOUNTAIN: An operational/grand tactical scale Medieval Campaign. BM is a more detailed and complicated game than World Emperor,allowing players many more options. Game 1 is due to start as soon as all 25 positions have been filled, expected to be within the next 2-3 months.

GOLD! GLORY! GOD!: A role-playing game based on the Spanish exploration and conquest of the Americas. Each player takes the role of a Conquistador in search of elusive riches. At this stage it looks to be an excellent and exciting game with plenty of room for adventure. The first game should be starting in about a month.

In the development stage there are several new games in the offing. *Kriegsmarine*, a naval campaign game. *Coup D'etat*, a game of politics in a Banana Republic. Further developments of *Black Mountain* into the Renaissance and Napoleonic eras. C.R.E. Games attempts to offer PBM gamers something different and something for everyone.

Chris Edwards.

AUSTRALIAN WIZARD: GPO Box 356, Brisbane 4001, QLD.

THE MISSING TIGER: GPO Box 286c, Hobart 7001 TAS. (002) 233 3926.

CHAMELEON GAMES: GPO Box 2302, Sydney 2001, NSW.

C.R.E. GAMES: PO Box 90, Lutwyche 4030, QLD.

PBM GAMES: 360 Winona Rd., Mt Eliza 3930 VIC. – *(refer letters to editor)*

Contributions

Writing Reviews

PANDORA is always interested in reader reviews of kits, games, PBM, software and publications. To cover the field as widely as possible it is our intention to publish as many capsule reviews, approximately 400 words in length, as possible along with a smaller number of feature reviews.

We will pay $10 for each capsule review accepted unless we supply the item to be reviewed in which case the item MAY be offered as payment.

At this stage reviews may cover either a new item or one that has been on the market for some time. However older items should be the most recent 'update'. Why not submit a capsule review at the same time as a feature review.

CAPSULE REVIEWS

Each capsule review should be five paragraphs long and contain:

(1) Basic Information – Present these facts in order: NAME of item being reviewed, Medium/Type (i.e. board game, Commodore C64 adventure disk, Scale model kit etc), Designer/Author/Programmer, Publisher/Manufacturer/ Distributor, Price, Availability (i.e. Gaming outlets, computer stores etc.), Reviewer and any other obvious detail we've not listed.

(2) General description of the item – (i.e. Theme and concept).

(3) Strong Points – Discuss what is good about the game; bring out its worth while features. Be specific – 'Fun' is a useless adjective.

(4) Weak points – Discuss its problems even if they are minor ones. If there is a fatal flaw come out and say so. If you can phrase your criticism as suggestions for improvement, do so.

(5) Summation – Your overall opinion. Who should and should not buy it, and why. Is the game worth its price etc..

All reviews must be signed; the reviewer's name WILL be printed. No item must be reviewed by its designer and/or author, by a playtester, or by an employee of the publisher or distributor. (Designer's articles are welcome, but must be billed as such!)

This review format is designed to encourage fairness and to give the reader enough information to let him/her decide whether to buy the item. Keep in mind when you write. This is a short review not a complete analysis.

FEATURE REVIEWS

These will be reviews of 1,000 to 1,500 words long. They should contain all information listed above, plus whatever else the reviewer wants to say. They may be written in any format. Achievable illustrations may be suggested.

COMPLETE GAMES

We intend to publish, fairly frequently, complete board and role play games (and computer listings) within PANDORA. Already some Australian authors are submitting work to us. We would welcome serious game design submissions for future publications.

The more thoroughly prepared a submission is the more consideration it will gain. Mr Armintrout's submission of 'DRAGON RUN' came playtested with suggested graphics, mock-up gamesboard, counters and Instructions were neatly typed with advance game rules for future issues. Publisher reserves the right to make editorial adjustment to any submission accepted.

GENERAL

PBM rumours, contacts, threats and other mischief are welcome. Along with requests for players, model parts etc.

Clubs – 'You show us yours and we'll show you ours'. Register with PANDORA. Let us have your office bearers names, contact address and all relevant information – meetings, activities – put PANDORA on you newsletter mailing list because when you register we'll be sending you a free club copy each issue.

We are open to constructive criticism, suggestions and article submissions not covered above.

Send submissions to KIM BOOKS 82 Alexander Street Crows Nest N.S.W. 2065.

COMPETITIONS – Continued from page 46

SOMETHING! column this issue.

Please forward a clean, clear listing of the program suitably REM'd to explain the workings. A written line by line description would also be appreciated.

COMPETITION 5 – FUN

In issue 1 Editorial Merv wrote: "May the golden beaked emu forever peck in your galactic chook yard".

In *Letters to the Editor* this issue J. Andrew writes: "May the Storm Bull lend more power to your pen."

Merv's reply was: "And may the same deity drop plentiful blessings upon your head."

We will send a NSW Instant lottery ticket to the first 5 reader's who's greeting, replies or solicitations   published each issue.

We've had a lot of fun with this style of competition in the COMMODORE magazine and it makes for good light hearted reading.

Only one ticket person per issue no limitations be as fluent and sarcastic as you like. If you wish you can 'knock' games, suppliers, rivals even the editor – he can always go to the corner and suck his thumb!

NOTE

The editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Paid contributions are not eligible to enter any competition. Submissions will only be returned if SAE is nclosed.